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TWENTY THOUSAND HOMELESS MEN

A STUDY OF UNEMPLOYED MEN IN THE CHICAGO SHELTERS

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FLOYD HOUSE, *Editor*

TWENTY THOUSAND HOMELESS MEN

A STUDY OF UNEMPLOYED MEN IN THE CHICAGO SHELTERS

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PREFACE

This book is a report of an organized study of approximately twenty thousand homeless men on relief in the Chicago shelters of the Service Bureau for Men, a division of the Illinois Emergency Relief Commission. This study was authorized by the Illinois Emergency Relief Commission on January 15, 1934. The shelters are described as of the spring of 1935 when the field work terminated. The staff during the principal period of field work consisted of eight sociologists, four psychiatrists, four psychologists, two statisticians, and nine clerks and stenographers.[1]

The principal purpose of the study was to secure a better understanding of the life experiences and attitudes of the shelter men and of their reactions to the relief policies which were being used. It is therefore written from the point of view of the men rather than from the point of view of the police, the social worker, or the tax-payer.

Since the study attempted to secure insight into the lives of the men, comparatively great use was made of informal conversations in which life histories and attitudes were elicited. In addition to the use of these informal interview methods by all members of the staff, six research workers lived in the shelters as shelter clients for periods ranging from one week to several months, and two bona fide shelter

[1] The salaries of the staff members were paid by the Illinois Emergency Relief Commission, and the other expenses of the project by the Social Science Research Committee of the University of Chicago. The authors of this book were connected with the University of Chicago during the period of the study. A copy of each of the case histories secured in this study is on file with the Social Science Research Committee of the University of Chicago.

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residents of unusual competence became members of the research staff. This plan of investigation was designed to permit the men to describe themselves as freely and intimately as possible, and the present report carries out the same plan. Because verbatim reports are an indispensable means of securing insight into attitudes, such records occupy a considerable part of this book. The portions of the book which are not of that nature are principally inferences from or summaries of such conversations. Shelter men are not masters of grammar and their speech is crude and often vulgar. Some of the profanity and vulgarities have been deleted from the quotations; in other respects their statements are not altered significantly. Because slang words and phrases are used with great frequency, they do not appear in quotation marks. The names presented in conversations and case histories are in all instances fictitious.

Though this study was confined principally to the Chicago shelters, it would apply with little modification to the shelters in almost any other large city, for the shelter men and the shelters in other cities are essentially the same as in Chicago. This study did not include the specialized shelters maintained by the federal government for transients. The transients are, on the average, younger and more independent than the residents of the local shelters, but there is a great deal of overlapping in respect to age and most of the other characteristics of the men. Consequently the findings and conclusions of this study would probably apply to a large extent to the transient shelters.[2]

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[2] On November 1, 1935, all transient shelters in the United States were placed under the control of the local relief agencies for homeless men.

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The authors wish to make acknowledgment to Mr. Allan R. Carpenter, former director of the Service Bureau for Men, who urged that this study of the shelters be made and who cooperated with the staff in every possible way; to Dr. Martin H. Bickham, research director for the Illinois Emergency Relief Commission; to Mr. Robert C. Woellner and the other members of the committee of the University of Chicago which assisted in directing research studies; and especially to the following members of the research staff of this study: John Ingersoll, Paul C. Oien, Stephen Oreskey, E. B. Pletcher, Dr. Ben L. Reitman, and Seymour Stein. Two of the research workers, Morton H. Phelps and S. Kirson Weinberg, gave additional assistance in the preliminary writing of portions of the report. Mr. Phelps was particularly helpful in the formulation of the general plan of the study.

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CHAPTER I

INITIATION INTO SHELTER LIFE

Approximately twenty thousand homeless unemployed men were living in twenty shelters in Chicago during the average month covered by this study. These shelters provided lodging, meals, and facilities for cleanliness and recreation. The buildings used for shelters are schools, warehouses, and factories which had been abandoned as unfit for use, and even the old county jail. They harmonize with their environment, for they are generally located in the deteriorated areas of the city adjacent to the central business section and are surrounded by many dilapidated old residences and abandoned stores and factories.

A visitor approaching a typical shelter in pleasant weather will find many dirty, ragged, and unkempt men sitting or lying on the sidewalks in front of or near the shelter. On the other hand, if he approaches it on a rainy day he will find most of the men crowded into the assembly room and he will be repulsed by the permeating odor which emanates from the room.

This visitor will see a good many of the external aspects of the shelter, but even if he spends several hours in his visit he will miss the aspects of shelter life which are most vital to the men. These can be appreciated only from intimate revelations of the men's own experiences. One of the research workers, who secured such an appreciation by living in the shelters as a client for several months, kept a diary of his conversations and other experiences with shelter men.

The remainder of this chapter is composed of selections from his diary. These initiate one into the intimate life of the men in the shelters.

A SHELTER "CLIENT'S" DIARY

Registering for Relief

I got my first taste of shelter life at 758 West Harrison, where application for admission to the shelters is made. I had to stand around outside a while before the doorman would let me in. When I got inside the building I found a lot of men sitting on benches. They were cursing the shelter, the shelter men, and the case workers. One old man sitting near me complained with curses, "There's too much cock-eyed red tape around this place. It's getting worser and worser every time I come up here." A younger man confided to me, "It took a lot of courage for me to come into this place; in fact I came up here three times before I went in and then only when a couple of friends came along who had been in before."

The medical examination was a joke except for the fact that it was no joke to have to wait so long in order to have this two-minute examination. After the medical exam I went to the case worker. He surely put me through the third degree. I was rather prepared for it, for one of the men had explained to me: "Hell, they want to know when your grandmother died, what she died of, and why did ya let her die. They ask you a few questions, get up and chew the fat with someone, then maybe come back and ask a few more questions. Boy, when you go through all that red tape to get in here and swear that pauper's oath, and swear you've told the truth when you have told several lies, you've touched bottom. There's no pride left." In my case, my life history was gone over. He asked me why I came to Chicago and why I was staying here. Although I told him a fairly truthful story he gave me the feeling that he believed I was lying. Finally I got the blue card which made me a bona fide inmate of a shelter. The fact that they admit practically all applicants raises the question, Why all the red tape?

So after three days I finally got through the Intake and at four o'clock got over to the shelter to which I was assigned. Missed supper. None of the fellows bothered to go for it and I waited for someone to leave and when I inquired I found that it was all over. The men said it was fish and it wasn't well cooked. In a little while we new men were lined up and as we passed by a certain desk a clerk demanded, "What's your name? How old are you?" Then yelled, "Hey, Charlie, here's another one for fumigation." Charlie came up, "O. K., come on with me." The fumigation wasn't as bad as I expected. In fact it was rather nice to know that you could take a bath and that the fumigation would kill any bugs that you might have gotten at the Intake. They gave us nightgowns. Most of the men didn't like this "nightgown parade." Wandering around the shelters in one's nightgown is not a very elevating experience.

The Breadline

The breadline[1] is one of the characteristic features of the shelter environment. Morning, noon, and night the men go through the process of lining up for their meals, slowly moving into the dining room, picking up a tray and being handed a knife, fork, and spoon, passing by a counter where food is thrown on their plates, being directed by waiters to a seat at a long board table, sitting on a backless bench at a common table where all men shovel in their food, and on their way out of the dining room depositing the dirty dishes in certain receptacles. In the breadline one comes into intimate contact with the real atmosphere of the shelters.

Going to my first breakfast, I found a long line moving slowly by some garbage cans. "Those damn garbage cans. It's a wonder they can't find some place else to put them." Every meal, day in and day out, we go by "those damn garbage cans." They turned my stomach at first, then I quit looking at them unless they had not been disinfected for a few days and smelled so bad that I had to notice them. Then there are the filthy spittoons which are placed

[1] The breadline here described is that of 116 Green Street.

in convenient and prominent places along the line of march, or rather shuffle. One shrugs his shoulders and "takes it." Getting into the dining room I found that the breakfast was not bad—a fruit of some kind, cooked cereal, coffee, bread, and butter.

About 11:30 I was in a small group near the shelter and someone suggested going over to dinner. "No use now, if you want to get in early you should have gone over at eleven and gotten in the line then. Hell, there's a line around to Peoria by now." So all waited. Finally someone got up and it was a general sign for everyone. The line was still around to Peoria. "Might as well line up now, it'll get no better, in fact it might get worse." We lined up and slowly moved toward the entrance. It took thirty minutes.

Today's dinner consisted of soup, stew, no meat, cornstarch pudding, bread, and "coffee." Many of the men left their hats and coats on. Everybody shoveled in their food. Across from me today sat a bum. He mixed all his food in one bowl and gulped it down; then he grabbed for some extra bread and broke that up, poured some coffee on it and lifted the bowl to his lips and drank the bread and coffee. Most of the men make a noise when they eat. I tried not to watch but it can't be helped. I ate fast and got done so as to get away. It turned my stomach. That and the garbage cans are almost too much. I soon got wised up and learned to gauge my time so as to make the line with those I know, but I can't control who is to sit across from me.

The supper breadline begins at three-thirty, but at that hour I wasn't hungry so decided to wait until four-thirty or five. However, someone said, "We might as well go over. It is too early but if we go now there won't be a line, while if we wait until five there's a line. There's no nourishment in that stuff anyhow so we might as well go and get it over with." There was only a small line and we got right in. Supper wasn't bad. Cocoa or tea to drink. The cocoa is strong and bitter. No sugar in it at all. Some of the men have sugar with them, usually carrying it in a tobacco bag.

After supper I went back to the shelter. The sun was going down and it started to cool off a bit and it got chilly. "There's no heat

in that food. Hell, I used to go all winter around Chicago and not get cold but I'm cold already and winter isn't here yet. What in hell will we do when it does get cold? They'll have to let us stay in the shelter in the morning, and they'll have to do something about that line too. They can't expect us to stand out there and freeze." Everyone agreed that "They'll do something." I asked if anything was done about it last year, or the year before, and found out that there wasn't, and as it got colder and nothing was done I decided with the rest of the men, "They don't give a damn about us. What if a few men do die, who in hell cares? A few more or less out of this line don't make any difference, and if we do die, it'll be fewer to feed. I guess they'd be happy if we all died, and by God I'm telling you, if a flu epidemic ever breaks out this winter, the men in this line will die like fleas."

Physical Facilities

A general assembly room provides a place in which to sit, loaf, or play cards and other games. During that part of the day when the men are allowed in the shelter the assembly room is overcrowded. This is due to the fact that the men are not allowed in the sleeping rooms during the day and to the fact that the assembly room is too small to take care of the needs of a shelter. There are not enough seats for everyone, and some either stand or sit on the floor. A man may sit in a chair for hours just to retain a place to sit.

In the smoking room are groups of men playing cards, checkers, or dominoes. Some are talking, others with blank looks are just sitting, staring into space with vacant eyes. In the assembly or recreation room a few men are stretched out on the floor apparently asleep. Over on one side four men are sitting on the floor playing cards. All the card tables and all the chairs are in use. The room is full of smoke and the air is oppressive.

In the assembly room native and foreign-born, black[2] and white,

[2] There is a separate shelter for Negroes, but the classification is not strictly adhered to. There are Negroes in all the shelters and some white men in the Negro shelter.

the ex-clerk and the ex-convict, the bum and the skilled tradesman, all sorts and conditions of men are crowded together. This situation is enervating and depressing and provides opportunity for prejudice to develop into outward antagonism.

Each shelter has its bull-pen, which is generally located in the basement and is dark, damp, and dismal. The furniture consists of a few backless benches. The room is littered with waste paper, cigarette stubs, wads of chewing tobacco, discarded clothing, crusts of bread, and the like. It is filthy, probably inhabited by lice. In the bull-pen with its indescribable filth, its odors, and its crowding, the men feel that they are hidden from the world; here they are free, free to mend their socks, to spit on the floor, to blow their noses without using handkerchiefs. One function of the bull-pen is punishment. Men who fail to fumigate, miss-outs (those absent from the dormitory the previous night), and those who are intoxicated are compelled to sleep here on the benches or on the concrete floor.

The shelters provide washing facilities: tubs, wash boards, hot and cold water, soap, and a clothes dryer. If one goes down to the basement almost any afternoon one finds men stripped to the waist, bending over wash tubs, and scrubbing out their clothing. Some are sitting around waiting for their clothes to dry. The fellows take washing as a necessary evil rather than a duty. Some of the clothes of the old fellows around here are black, especially the underwear. Very likely they only have one suit. The laundry room is generally crowded.

In another part of the basement is the wash-room. Here you will see men standing in line waiting to wash or to shave or to go to the toilet, and hear remarks such as: "Why in hell can't this be arranged different so we won't be packed in here like sardines?" "This damn soap is no good, it won't lather."

Showers are provided by the shelters. I take a bath about three times a week. That's all I dare. If I took any more, they'd think I was nuts and some of them would make suggestive allusions to the "pretty boy." One cannot be known as a pretty boy; it is worse

than being known as a dope head. Many even try to get out of taking a bath when they fumigate, and that only comes once every two weeks. But, "They've got us beat now, and we can't sneak out any more. You have to go in one door and out the other, so they would be bound to catch you, so we have to take a bath every two weeks."

The shelters provide a general store room, but only a few individual lockers. As a result the men feel an insecurity for some of their personal belongings and carry many things around with them. "I have to carry my razor, soap, sewing kit, handkerchief, tobacco, matches, comb, extra pair of socks, tickets, and all this junk in my pockets, all day long. Believe me in the hot summer time this is no joke. But where am I to put it?" When going to bed at night, many put their shoes, socks, trousers, vests, shirts, and everything else of value under their heads for pillows and also for safe-keeping. "There are men in here who would steal anything that they thought they could get a dime for; they can sell these things and buy drinks. Why, for a while the guys here even stole the blankets and those narrow sheets we sleep on. Nearly every bootlegging joint is stocked up with blankets. That's why I haven't got a coat now; somebody stole it. There are fellows in this room who can take your shoes off while you sleep. Don't go to sleep in here with a good pair of shoes on because you are liable to wake up barefooted. If you wake up while he is unlacing them, he will make out he's just playing, but if you don't wake up, it's too bad."

Signs are conspicuous in various parts of the building. In the assembly room one sees the sign, "Don't spit on the floor." No one makes any attempt to hit the receptacles, simply spitting in the general direction of one. Men coughing and spitting all the time. No attempt is made by the majority to cover up their mouths. It's not a very healthy place. I have developed a cough and have had several colds since I came in here. You can't help getting a cold here; no fresh air, and if a window is opened it gets too cold.

Signs on the walls. "No gambling." That's a joke. No one has much money anyhow and if the men get a little money they gamble right in the shelters. "Men using toilet paper for drying hands will

have shelter service discontinued immediately." But between 9 and 4 P.M. the locker room is locked so you can't get a towel and there is no chance to wash for dinner unless you break the rule. They certainly do not exert themselves to make things convenient for us around these places. More signs. "No shaving between 6 and 7 A.M." "Men using paper to spit on must dispose of same." "No spitting in waste baskets." Going up to bed the fellow ahead of me in the line spit in the waste basket; the watchman didn't seem to mind. After we had passed by the watchman this fellow remarked, "Damn them, we'll spit in the waste basket just to show them." And so up the stairs and to bed.

Sleeping Conditions

The sleeping quarters, with the exception of one or two shelters, are of the dormitory type, a large number of men sleeping in a single room. Most of the beds are canvas army cots[3] and these cots are literally packed into a room until there is barely room to walk between them. As a rule twenty-five men sleep in a room. Each man is provided with a sheet and two or three blankets.

At nine P.M. the men rapidly start moving in. While the men are given nightgowns for sleeping, most of them prefer to sleep in their underwear. Some of them sleep with their trousers on and others keep on all of their clothes. The alcoholic group falls asleep more quickly than most of the other men, because as the men say, "Alcohol is the friend of the tired man. It allows him to forget and also gives him sweet dreams." No sleep for me, though, for the first three or four hours, for the snoring, sneezing, moaning, sleep-talking, and coughing keep me awake. Last night one man coughed so loud and so long that he woke everyone up. Finally a fellow told him, "For Christ's sake shut up or get to hell out of here." It seemed strange, but he only coughed twice after that. Another interesting thing happened last night. A man opened a window and someone at the far end of the room yelled, "Put that window down!"

[3] These canvas cots later were largely replaced by steel cots.

Another man got up and put it down; then someone else yelled, "Put that damn window up! Do you want us all to suffocate?" The man in the next bed grumbled, "These bums have absolutely no manners or consideration for we other men. It's hell trying to sleep at night. I just get so damn tired trying to go to sleep. I wish I could get out of this damn place so I could get a good night's rest, but I don't see much hope of doing it." When I finally got to sleep it was only to waken at about 3:30 or 4 o'clock. I was cold. The blankets seem to be made of paper. Soon the steam was turned on and I thought that it was getting warmer so I turned over and tried to go back to sleep. However the sizzling and cracking of the steam in the pipes kept me awake. Finally 6 A.M. came and I got up because there was nothing else to do.

A man may feel sick and want to stay in bed for the day, but most of the shelters have a regulation requiring all men to arise by a certain hour. The administration feels that if exceptions were allowed, many men would give the excuse of sickness in order to stay in bed. However, this inflexible rule works a hardship on the really sick person. For instance, this last week I have had a cold, the shivers, a headache, and everything else that goes with the grippe. Last night I was shivering so that I left on my underwear, put on a sweater, and a pair of socks. I didn't sleep well—dreamt all night of breadlines, pay lines, and more lines. Boy, what a night! Felt like my head was going to bust wide open. Finally morning came and I felt terrible, was tired and sleepy. But a man has to leave his bed in the morning regardless of how he feels. Felt so punk today that I slept on the benches down in the bull-pen. That's one thing about this place, even though you're sick, you can't go to your bed until 7 P.M.

In the morning the gloom and despair of the shelters seem to be in the men's bones. At times as many as fifteen men will be in the wash-room together and not a word will be uttered unless it is to complain about somebody who is taking too long to wash. Many of the men dress themselves fully, including overcoat and hat, before attempting to wash. Out on the sleeping floors many complaints

will be heard about having to rise so early with nothing to do after one does get up. Some are kicking about too much air during the night and others about not enough. A man is complaining that during the night a neighbor spit on his clothes; another is kicking about somebody who washed his underwear in the wash bowl. All in all, if ever a cheerful word is heard before breakfast, it is certainly exceptional.

Anonymity and Casual Contacts

The men as a whole do not want to be known and seem to desire only casual contacts[4] I have become acquainted with a few men, particularly the ones who sleep in the immediate vicinity of my cot, but I do not know their names. I can get into any group by just sauntering up to it; I will be introduced to the conversation but never to any person. For months you may talk daily to individuals and never know their names. "I know lots of the fellows here, but I don't know any of them very well. I am sort of friendly with them. I just say 'hello' and pass on."

The reaction of the men to receiving mail and to the questions asked at the Intake illustrate their desire to remain unknown. While most of the men receive their mail at the house of a friend or at General Delivery, once a day a clerk comes down with the mail. Everyone becomes quiet but there are no expectations on anyone's part. If a letter does come for someone it is a matter of surprise. On the whole the attitude is, "Hell, I'd never get a letter here, no one knows I'm here, and they won't find out either if I can help it. That's why I told them over at 758 West Harrison (the Intake) I didn't have any close relatives; they write to everyone you tell them about, damn 'em." I soon found out that this is a bone of con-

[4] Nels Anderson in *The Hobo* gives anonymity as one of the characteristics of homeless men. "But with all the discussion there is seldom any effort to discuss personal relations and connections. Here is one place where every man's past is his own secret. Only in the case of very young boys or sick men and sometimes old men is there any effort to learn something of the individual's past. . . . They live closed lives and grant others the same privilege." p. 20. By permission of the University of Chicago Press.

tention. "Why in hell do they write to everyone you know? Isn't it bad enough to be here without everyone finding out about it?" "If I would have known then what I know now they wouldn't have even got my right name." "Me either." "Well I didn't tell them any more than I had to."

Some men become members of groups and have more intimate relationships than others. This is true of nationality and racial groups, alcoholics, and those who previously engaged in similar economic activities. You look over to where Shorty is playing cards and find that he is talking to two of his friends who were formerly West Madison Street cooks. Shorty also claims to be a cook. In another small group there is a discussion going on about the way big business is ruining America by squeezing the small man out. I found that they all had had small businesses and were forced to close up because of lack of credit. Now they sympathize with each other, feeling that "the damned bankers are working hand in fist with big business to ruin the little men."

Shelter Conversation

The desire to remain unknown and the barriers between nationality, race, and occupation groups lead to an absence of intimate conversation. Some of the men are extremely inarticulate, sitting hour after hour and day after day with hardly a word to anyone. Others would like to talk but find difficulty in conversing with other shelter men. "I can't talk to a lot of these fellows around here. They don't know what you're talking about most of the time." However, even though social barriers impede the flow of communication, small cliques and groups do have more intimate conversation.

When I first came into the shelters it seemed that the men talked a great deal about their past accomplishments, exaggerating things they had done, the money they had earned, and the women they had conquered. It seemed that the present unhappy experiences had led to a loss of self-esteem, and, as a result, the men had turned to daydreaming, attempting to find in such dreams the happiness and suc-

cess which they had failed to attain in everyday life. So they talk and boast about their past accomplishments and successes. Now and then a man may apologize for the number of good things he says about himself and for introducing his own self into the conversation so much. Apparently in the face of repeated failures these men have a struggle to maintain a high opinion of themselves, and exaggerate their past accomplishments as a means of bolstering up their courage and self-respect.

As I got better acquainted, I found that this type of conversation tended to stop and the talk shifted to practical questions of present experience—what there will be for breakfast, the weather, what to do, stemming (begging), snipe-shooting (picking up butts of cigars and cigarettes), the man who was jack-rolled last night (robbed while drunk), cursing the case worker, hitting the transient camps, the two-bit work (work in the shelters for which twenty-five cents is paid), and topics relative to economics and government. After breakfast the men generally congregate in front of the shelter in small groups and converse on these and other topics. In one group there may be an earnest discussion as to the possibility of making a few dollars by peddling bills, unloading trucks, working on docks, and other odd jobs which are available for shelter men. Moving to another group a man may find the men engaged in an earnest discussion as to where begging is best. One man is expostulating on what restaurants can "be made for a meal if you put it right." Another is complaining, "Street stemming ain't so good any more, for the cops keep on your tail and besides the people have been bummed too much." Others recommend certain places for begging. "Go out near a busy cross line like Lincoln and Belmont or 63rd and Cottage Grove and you'll make your pile regular as clock-work."

You hear a man ask another one for the makings and the other one replying, "Go and shoot your own snipes like I do." The conversation of the group immediately switches to the most likely spots for snipe-shooting and it will be learned that many of these men have their regular spots where picking up cigarette and cigar butts is best.

Again the conversation shifts, this time to a general cursing of the case workers. "Why that lousy heel, you know what he did to me last week? He pulled my meal ticket and I had to wait a day and a half and all he wanted to know was if I had found a job yet and if I was sure I would work if I could. I'd like to catch him alone on the street some day." You hear Shorty damning the case worker because he couldn't get his clothes and saying, "Just let them put a gun in my hand and I'll show them." He walks away when somebody says, "There you go again, let somebody put a gun in your hand. If you had any guts, you would go out and get yourself a gun." In general the conversation is filled with cursing, grumbling, and complaining.

The comparative benefits of transient camps and shelters come up for an airing. The conversation runs something like this, "I'm getting tired of lying around here; think I'll hit the boxes." "Hell, you hit federal transient shelters and all along the line they feed you much better and give you ninety cents a week to boot." "Might just as well lie in a shelter in a warm country for the winter as to freeze here."

If one goes into the assembly room on an afternoon or evening, he will hear men giving the capitalistic system hell in a big way. A dozen cure-alls are suggested as immediate remedies for the depression—communism, socialism, take the profits out of business, immediate payment of the soldiers' bonus, old-age pensions, unemployment insurance, government work projects, and the like. At first I listened with interest but I heard the same thing every day of the week, and, if I had stayed long enough and wanted to, I could have listened to it by the year. After a few days my interest lagged and I found something else to do.

Occasionally a rumor will spread through the shelters like wildfire: two meals a day, work for everyone, no more two-bit work. "A hundred men were poisoned at 116 Green Street yesterday and the administration is trying to hush it up." "Some of the windows fell out of 54 West Austin and several of the men were severely cut." "Say, did you know they had a riot over on Randolph Street?

Yah, like I was telling you, the chuck got so bad that they started throwing knives, forks, spoons, and pans. Boy, they had a hell of a time over there." Some of the rumors soon pass; others are believed to be actual facts, and for weeks the men will continue to talk about them.

There is ceaseless argument and discussion with everybody agreeing, an endless one-sided debate about the flophouse, the food, and how they would like to get out, but nothing is ever done about it. The majority just sit and talk about what is going to happen and how it better happen pretty soon or they'll do so and so, but there is little or no group action to demand something better. There is a great deal of talk and argument and cursing, but the discussion practically never eventuates in group action.

Red Tape

It seems to me that the red tape of the shelters makes the men lose their sense of responsibility and initiative. Their whole life is regulated for them; they are told when and where to sleep, are awakened at the same time day in and day out, are told how much, or better how little, to eat, and when and what should be eaten. In fact, their daily routine is wholly a matter of program. Certain days, and at certain periods on those prescribed days, they do certain things in a certain way. Everything is a matter of routine; and to make certain that the men do not even have to use their minds to remember these prescribed duties, they are bulletined all over the building.

Day after day there is a constant repetition of the same thing: line up to dress, line up to eat, line up for fumigation, line up to take a bath, line up to work, line up to get paid. "Why in hell don't they line us up against the wall and shoot us and get it over with."

The Passing of Time

Time drags on in the shelter. During the first month it seemed to me that each day was like a week: nothing to do and all day to

do it in. After that month the passing of time was unnoticed by me, as it is by the majority of the men. Many men have to find out what day it is so they can count the number of days before they have to do their two-bit work. Someone is always asking for the time and invariably the answer is, "What in hell difference does it make? You're not going any place."

With the passing of time there are still the same faces, the same topics of conversation, the same men advocating the same ideas, the same arguments for or against whatever happens to be up for discussion, the same food, the same line ups, the same recreations. Everything's the same, the men, the shelter, and everything connected with it.

The monotony of the thing at first weighs on one's mind, but with the passing of time this condition slowly changes, and only at infrequent intervals, which become more widely separated, does this monotony bother him. It is not only the monotony of shelter life but the absolute aimlessness of the things one does. There is no end to accomplish, nothing to look forward to, no reason why one should even do the things he does. There is no reason why one should walk fast, so one learns to walk slow; there is no place to go. There is no need to look for a job, so after a bit one doesn't even think of it. There is no reason why one should go to the library when he can get a book at the shelter and go over to the McCoy Hotel and read. There is no reason to think independently, so one agrees with the group. A man's life becomes narrowed to a limited sphere of action, and after a few months his independence is broken down, his individuality disappears, his identity is lost, his personality becomes reorganized, and he becomes shelterized.

The only noticeable change is the change in oneself. With each succeeding day one feels himself pushed down into a hopeless maelstrom—getting farther and farther from the outer edge, into the middle of the vortex from which there will be no escape. The absolute uselessness of attempting to improve one's condition is soon a part of his thoughts and actions. Though the men may not entirely abandon hope, they talk always in terms of tomorrow.

Tomorrow they will get a job and get out of the shelters. It's always tomorrow, never today. One man explained why he remained in the shelters, as follows: "Those men who do leave, I watch with envy, wishing I were in their boots. However, I know that they are going nowhere; that they are walking in a circle; that after a few months they will wind up in some shelter, possibly in another city. As far as I am concerned, I do not perceive how I am going to get out of the shelters and if I do get out how I can stay out. So I just stay on, thinking that perhaps things will be different later."

Of course, some of the men are hoping that something will break and they will get out. "Something is bound to happen soon; it can't go on like this forever. Either the government or the big industries will have to do something soon or the country will be all shot to hell. Just don't let it get you down." It's always someone else, and especially the government, who has to do something to help. In the meantime the men wait and wait and wait, and if the shelters are open until the day they die, they will still be waiting for someone else to move them out.

CHAPTER II

WHY MEN ENTER THE SHELTERS

Why does a person choose to become a shelter man? The answer which is likely to be made is that he does not choose to enter the shelters but is forced to do so because he is destitute and homeless. Destitution and homelessness, to be sure, are the formal conditions of eligibility to the shelters and a large proportion—probably three-fourths—of the men are destitute and homeless when they first apply to the shelters for relief. But there are persons equally destitute and homeless who do not enter the shelters but adopt such alternatives as suicide, making a living by crime or by begging, living on an extremely low level of subsistence, or becoming eligible for family relief by getting married or "taking a woman" in a common-law relationship.[1]

Furthermore, destitution, while it is a fundamental factor in shelter entrance, is a matter of degree. The intake department may be deceived in regard to the financial condition of the applicant and his ability to maintain himself outside the shelters. Rather than suffer the moral and social hardships of life in the shelters, some men subsist outside by legitimate employment on a standard of living which is lower than that in the shelters. Some could secure legitimate em-

[1] A relief client of wide experience states that those who apply for family relief immediately after marriage arouse suspicion, the case workers feeling that the marriage may have been arranged in order to secure relief. He states that the men know that this may result in the refusal of relief. It is safer and more customary to "take a woman" in a common-law relationship and then, as evidence for the case worker, to purchase a forged marriage certificate, which can be secured for fifty cents, dated at any time and place desired.

ployment which would provide a standard of living slightly higher than that in the shelters, but believe that the gain in standard of living is so slight that the effort is not worth while; life in a shelter, even on a slightly lower standard of living, is easier than the life which outside employment would provide. Others enter the shelters before they are completely destitute, and this is regarded by shelter men as a wise policy. Moreover, the shelters have become the traditional home of men in some groups and they live there regardless of the amount of money they have. Such men may leave the shelters in the spring to work in the harvests and, when they return in the autumn with two or three hundred dollars in their pockets, they re-enter the shelters immediately in order that their savings may be available for sprees, gambling, women, and incidental expenses. "The shelter is as good as the private flophouse in which we would otherwise live and is cheaper." Some of these men regard the whole relief system as a racket and wish to get their share. "I could stay out of the shelters if I had to but I might as well get this relief dough as the politicians." Thus destitution is a matter of degree, ranging from those who have completely used up their financial and social resources to those who choose to live in the shelters in order that they may use their funds for other purposes.

Homelessness, while it likewise is a fundamental factor in shelter entrance, is also a matter of degree. About a fourth of the men have relatives or friends who are accessible and who, in a large majority of cases if public relief were not available, could and would give some assistance to them. It is to be remembered that some men come into the shelters

in order that they may not be a further burden on their friends and relatives and that in other cases the friends and relatives refuse to assist a man because, "the state is better able to take care of you than we are." Homelessness is not an absolute condition but varies with individual cases.

The extent of destitution and homelessness which is required to force a man to apply for shelter relief is determined in part by the traditions and customs of the nationality, racial, or family group to which he belongs. These traditions may be so strong that members of the group would prefer suicide to the acceptance of relief, or they may be no barrier at all. Consequently, entrance into the shelters is not purely a matter of destitution and homelessness. Attitudes, traditions, and customs in regard to the acceptance of relief determine whether a man is willing to enter the shelters. This is true not only of the small number of cases in which men have a surplus of funds, but also in the cases of borderline and extreme destitution and homelessness.

In the effort to present hypotheses and factual material which will assist in explaining why a man becomes a shelter man, this chapter and the two following chapters will contain: first, a brief description of some of the theories which bear upon this problem; second, an analysis of the places of prior residence, as an index of the social and economic status of these men and of the effect produced upon their status by the depression; third, a statistical analysis of the characteristics of shelter men, together with a description of certain characteristics in regard to which statistics are not available; fourth, an analysis and description of the different types of shelter men; and fifth, a description of the roads to

dependency. A detailed description of the historical process which produced the problem of the dependent homeless man and the agencies for dealing with this problem will appear in Chapter VIII. These several approaches are designed to afford an understanding of the processes and factors which led these men to become shelter men.

Theories

The theories which purport to explain destitution, homelessness, and willingness to accept relief are of two types. One explains these traits in terms of the general historical process in the industrial and commercial world during the last century or two, the other by the characteristics of shelter men in differentiation from the characteristics of the normal population. These theories in many respects supplement each other.

The historical process consisted of fundamental changes in the industrial and commercial world and the resulting changes in social relations, such as the industrial revolution, mass migration to America, the development of the frontier, urbanization, the disintegration of organized family life, general mobility, and a great increase in impersonal relations. In the earlier peasant community men were stable and self-supporting. They lived in the midst of a wide circle of relatives and friends. Mutual aid, which characterized their daily lives as well as times of crisis, carried no stigma since it was both an obligation upon the one able to help and a right of the one who needed help.

These social relations and characteristics were modified in most essential respects during the last century. Industry

demanded a large supply of mobile labor at low wages. In response to this demand men were enticed away from their peasant communities in Europe and from rural communities in America. Most of the men now in the shelters are the type which provided this supply of labor. Since they were mobile and received low wages, they had little stimulation or opportunity for self-development, for family attachments, or for saving. Because they had no stable friendships and a very low social status, they were willing to accept relief in spite of its stigma, especially during the depression when millions of other people were accepting public relief.

In addition, technological changes and the depression made it impossible for men who had previously supported themselves to continue to do so. This has been especially true of older men, who even in normal times are not wanted in industry. Some of them had families, but the families had been broken by death, divorce, desertion, or other crises. Some of them had sons or daughters who would have supported them in normal times, but the depression reduced their children's ability to support their parents.

Similarly these technological changes and the depression made employment difficult or impossible for many young men who reached maturity during or shortly before the depression. They, likewise, were a burden on families which were struggling to take care of themselves and, being economically useless and discontented at home, they became transient, destitute, and willing to enter the shelters.

This interpretation describes properly the situation out of which shelter relief developed. It helps to explain why there were twenty thousand men in the Chicago shelters in 1934

and practically none in 1924. On the other hand it does not explain why in 1934 some men were unemployed and others employed, why some were unattached and others lived with their relatives, why some accepted relief in shelters and others refused to accept that relief.

The second interpretation attempts to explain the shelter man in terms of the characteristics which differentiate him from other men. There are three of these theories of individual differences, one emphasizing heredity, a second economic deprivation, and a third the selective value of personality traits.

The first of these theories of individual differences is that the shelter men are innately deficient in intelligence or in emotional stability. Because they lacked intelligence they were unable to make progress in school beyond the fourth or fifth grade and also were unable to rise in industry above the level of unskilled or semi-skilled occupations. Consequently they were unable to earn enough to carry them through a crisis, to support a family, or to pay high rent in good residential neighborhoods. Because they were emotionally unstable, they were unable to get along with friends or employers. They lost or voluntarily abandoned their jobs and their families; they roamed over the states and squandered their money on vicious pleasures. In contrast, others started at the same low level with an inherited equipment of intelligence, foresight, initiative, and persistence; they have been able to keep their employment through the depression or to live on the accumulated savings from past work, have acquired and supported families, and have not been destitute or homeless.

The second theory of individual differences describes the process in terms of economic deprivation. According to this theory, the men were reared in homes where the standards of living were low and were compelled to abandon school in order to accept the first available labor. Therefore they engaged in occupations which offered few opportunities or stimulations to advance, to save, and to make contacts with other social classes. In a crisis they are forced on relief, for they are without employment, savings, relatives, or friends. Being of a low social status, they do not have the pride which will prevent them from accepting relief. According to this theory those men who have reached a higher economic level and have not become dependent may be explained by their greater opportunities and more persistent stimulations. The occasional individuals who started with the same limited opportunities that the shelter men had and who reached a higher economic level may be explained largely by the subtle concatenations of circumstances which operate like the influences which determine what spots on the dice shall turn up, and which may therefore be called chance.

A third theory of individual differences is that many shelter men selected the life of Hobohemia or the situations which were antecedent to it because it was better adapted to their personalities than other modes of life. Some of the men who live in shelters and flophouses need mobility, anonymity, and moral freedom. The same need which impels the more fortunately situated to seek the freedom of hotel or apartment life leads many of the less fortunately situated to the environment of homeless men and to the shelters. Here a man can cease his economic and social

struggles in moral comfort. If dependency is inevitable, he can become dependent in an environment where that is the prevailing pattern of life. Many men cannot satisfy their sexual desires in a stable home life and become homeless as well as destitute. This process of selection of the situations where anonymity and moral freedom are possible may have begun early in life. The demand for irregular and casual labor is largely met by the man whose personality can be enmeshed with that industrial pattern with a minimum of tension. Once drawn into the life of the casual laborer, however, his personality becomes the product of the reciprocally re-enforcing tendencies of the personal and occupational life. His world closes in on him and the lock snaps shut.

Each of these theories explains a part of the problem. Certainly the general economic background is important, as are also the individual differences, whether these be due to heredity or to experience, and whether they result in behavior through compulsion or selection. But no one of the theories answers all of the questions. The factors and processes which resulted in entrance into the shelters are much more complicated than the preceding accounts indicate. Consequently these theoretical descriptions will be supplemented in the following sections by statistical and other factual information regarding the prior status and the specific characteristics of shelter men.

Status as Judged by Prior Residences

A person's place of residence is generally an index of his economic and social status. Therefore a study of the spatial

distribution of the residences of shelter men will give a general picture of their economic and social status prior to shelter entrance. This indirect method of determining the economic and social status of the men is more trustworthy than direct inquiry in regard to status. If a shelter man were asked, "Were you a bum before you entered the shelter?" or, "Were you a steady self-supporting workman before you entered the shelter?" his answer would be much less trustworthy than an appraisal based on his place of residence.[2]

The following analysis of former residences of shelter men is based on a sample of 1,882 men who were residing in the shelters in June, 1934, the sample being approximately every tenth case in each of the shelters.[3] One of the addresses

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[2] An investigation of the reliability of the previous addresses of shelter men as given in their case records by the method of visiting the residences and making inquiry of the present occupants, disclosed that correct addresses were given by 77.6 per cent of a random sample of 125 cases; that 5.6 per cent gave incorrect addresses in the case records but when interviewed by a research worker gave addresses which were verified; and that 16.8 per cent gave incorrect addresses in the case records and when interviewed did not give an address which could be verified. Of the 5.6 per cent of the addresses which were verified after the interview, 43 per cent fell in the same census tracts as the original address given in the case records and in no case did the corrected address and the original address fall in different sections as defined in this chapter. Consequently the corrected address of 5.6 per cent of the men did not alter the spatial distribution as secured from the addresses in the case records. It is to be assumed that if the correct addresses of the 16.8 per cent could be determined, nearly half of them would, as in the case of the 5.6 per cent, fall in the same census tracts as the recorded addresses, and almost all of the other addresses would fall in the same section. This indicates that on the whole the case records give a reliable and trustworthy picture of the spatial distribution of the men's residences, particularly when the distribution is made in terms of relatively large sections of the city.

[3] A similar analysis was made of 1,143 closed cases. The findings appear in the table on p. 30. The men in this sample had registered after June 1, 1933, when the information regarding addresses first became relatively complete and reliable with the initiation of the sworn affidavits, and their cases had been closed prior to June 1, 1934. The details of the findings in the closed cases are not discussed since they are almost identical with those in the open cases.

given in the case record was an earlier or permanent address of an average duration of three years. This address was used as the index of permanent social and economic status. The distribution of residences will be made in terms of five sections, with subdivisions of Sections I and V. The main sections are roughly in the form of concentric zones.

Prior economic and social status. A spatial distribution of the men's permanent residences shows that the shelter group is not a random sample of single men. For, rather than being evenly distributed throughout the city, the permanent residences of the men were concentrated in the cheap rent area around the Loop. It was found that 23.5 per cent[4] of the men in the sample had their permanent residences in the census tracts bordering on West Madison, North Clark, and South State Streets and inside the 1200 block. All of these census tracts are within a mile and a half from the corner of State and Madison, which is used as the central point of the city. The first half mile of this section is the central business district. Beyond this is the flophouse area where there are not only cheap lodgings but also pawn shops, second-hand clothing stores, taverns, poolrooms, gambling dives, and moonshine joints. Popular prices in this area are five dollars for a suit of clothes, one dollar for shoes, bed twenty-five cents, meal twenty cents, haircut fifteen cents, movie ten cents. A man can live in this area for a fraction of the cost in other sections of the city. Those who do live in the flophouse district are of the lowest social and economic status. The population in this area is composed of bums, casual

[4] Percentages in this book are to be considered as approximations due to the fact that the data for the most part consist of unverified statements by the men.

workers, and migratory laborers. This section is designated Section I-a in the table on page 33.

An additional 4.7 per cent of the men had permanent residences in Section I, or inside the 1200 block, but in census tracts not bordering on the three main streets. This additional area, designated as Section I-b, is very small and is not greatly different in its social aspects from Section I-a. Thus 28.2 per cent of the men had their permanent residence inside the 1200 block. This is particularly striking in view of the fact that only 4.1 per cent of the total adult male population of Chicago resides in this area.

An additional 25.2 per cent of the men had permanent residences in the area between 1200 and 2400 on the North and West and between 1200 and 2600 on the South. This zone is approximately a mile and a half in width, its outer boundary being roughly three miles from the center of the city, and contains 12.9 per cent of the total adult male population. This is an area of factories, deteriorated residences, and stores. It is generally outside of the flophouse territory but is the area of cheap furnished rooms, tenement houses, foreign settlements, with occasional isolated districts of first-class residences. For the most part the adult residents are foreign-born, unskilled laborers, and have a low economic and social status. This area is designated Section II.

If Sections I and II are combined, it is found that approximately one-half of the shelter men had permanent residences in the area within about three miles of the center of the city, although the area includes only 17 per cent of the total adult male population.

A third area of concentration, designated as Section III,

was a strip on the South side, about a mile wide and three and a half miles long, between 2600 and 5500 South, and between Cottage Grove and Dearborn. In this area, which is populated largely by Negroes, and which contains 5.5 per cent of the adult male population of the city, 11.2 per cent of the men had permanent residences.

Section IV, the area bounded on the North, South, and West by the 3200 blocks, on the inside by the outer boundary of Section II, and excluding Section III, is approximately the zone of the fourth mile from the center of the city. While this section contains 19.7 per cent of the total number of census tracts and 9.8 per cent of the total male population over twenty-one years of age, only 6.4 per cent of the shelter men had permanent residences here.

Only 29 per cent of the men had permanent residences in the area more than four miles from the center of the city, although this area contained 66.6 per cent of the census tracts and 67.7 per cent of the total adult male population. This area is designated as Section V. It was divided into Section V-a on the North side, where 4.4 per cent had permanent residences, Section V-b on the West side, where 5.2 per cent had permanent residences, and Section V-c, on the South side (excluding the strip designated as Section III), where 19.5 per cent had permanent residences. The South side area includes the stockyards, steel mills, and other large industrial plants, while the North and West sides are more completely residential areas.

Thus in this sample of shelter men 65 per cent had permanent residences in the flophouse area or in deteriorated residential districts for colored and white people within

approximately three miles from the center of the business section. Only 35 per cent of the men came from residential areas beyond the three mile limit, and these were concentrated somewhat definitely in the areas adjacent to the Negro area and to the large industrial plants. The chance that a man who had a permanent residence in Section I would enter the shelter was about 16 times as great as the chance that a man who had a permanent residence in Section V would do so.

The percentage distribution was supplemented by the distribution of rates of the men in the shelters for each section per 1,000 males twenty-one years of age or over who were enumerated in the sections. The details of these findings are not presented because they are almost identical with the conclusions derived from the percentage distributions.

The table on page 30 gives the rates for both the open and closed cases by sections for the permanent and temporary residence, on the basis of the 1930 and 1934 census data. It also gives a comparison of the percentage distribution by sections of the permanent and temporary residences of the closed case sample.

The general conclusions become apparent in the map on page 31, in which the permanent residences of the men are plotted in terms of the rates described above.

Effect of depression on residences. The question has been raised as to whether the depression forced men to leave desirable residential neighborhoods and enter Hobohemia. The sample of 1,882 men was selected from the cases that had two addresses—the first, or permanent residence which was analyzed on the preceding pages, and the last or tem-

COMPARISON OF RATE AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF OPEN AND CLOSED CASES FOR PERMANENT AND TEMPORARY RESIDENCES BY SECTIONS OF THE CITY

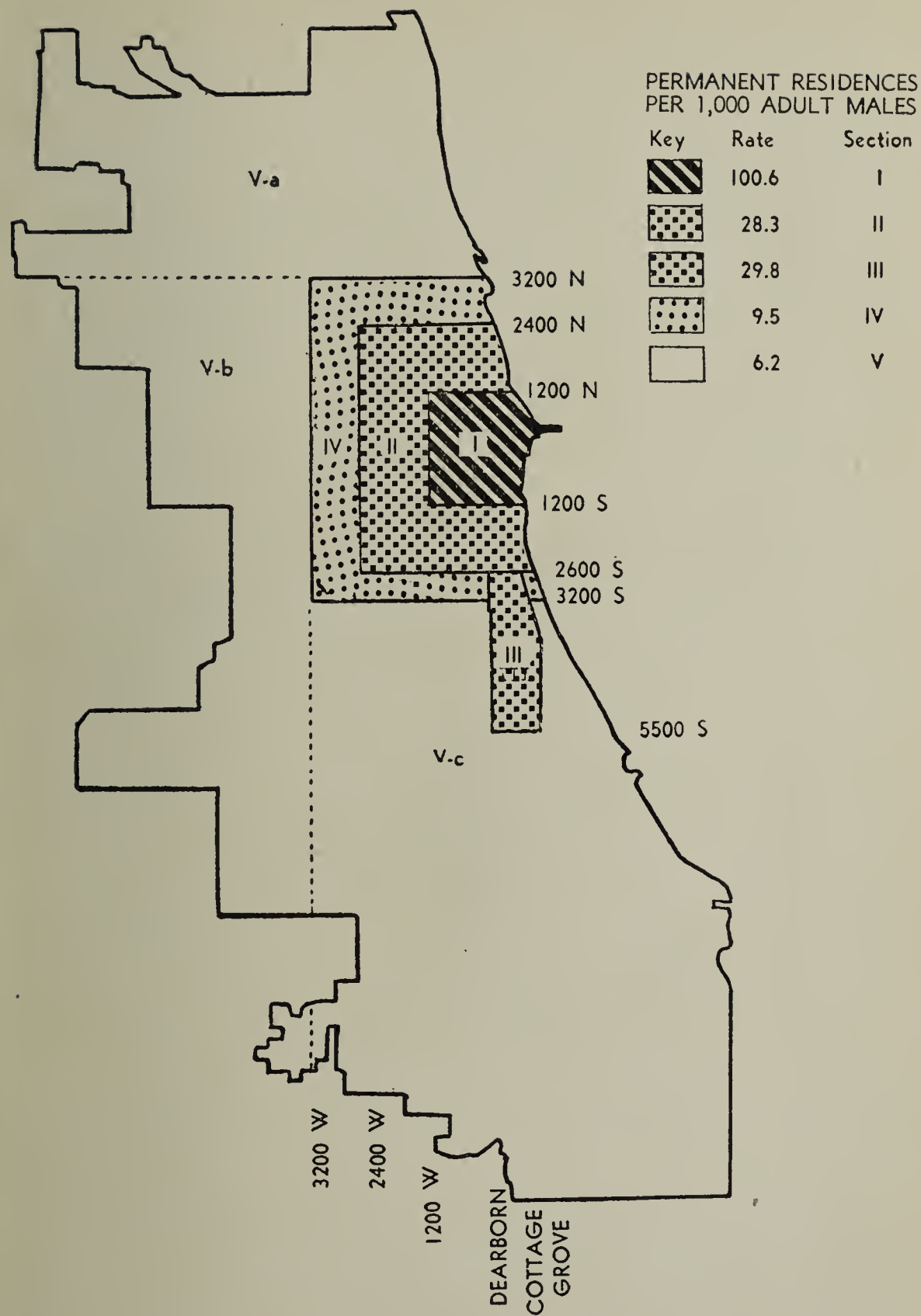
Section	Rates of Shelter Men per 1,000 Males 21 Years of Age and Over for 1,882 Open Cases and 1,143 Closed Cases				Percentage Distribution of 1,143 Closed Cases by Sections	
	Open Cases		Closed Cases			
	Permanent	Temporary	Permanent	Temporary	Permanent	Temporary
I	100.60	135.19	82.19	123.09	22.05	32.72
II	28.31	28.64	35.62	39.68	30.36	31.41
III	29.83	33.38	11.20	6.87	4.02	2.36
IV	9.49	7.38	15.38	14.07	9.89	8.14
V	6.21	4.77	7.56	5.68	33.68	25.37
V-a	2.41	2.65	6.53	5.03	(8.49)	(6.74)
V-b	4.10	2.93	7.70	5.64	(9.27)	(6.65)
V-c	9.51	7.34	8.14	6.17	(15.92)	(11.98)

porary residence which was selected so as to have it begin after 1929.[5] This made it possible to compare the residences of the men immediately prior to entering the shelter, or their depression residences,[6] with their permanent places of residence. The permanent residence had an average duration of three years, and the temporary residence an average duration of one year. By comparing the permanent and tempo-

[5] Only 40 of the sample of closed cases and 200 of the open cases were discarded because the most recent residence began prior to 1929.

[6] A distribution of temporary residences of 16,847 shelter cases open in October, 1934, made on the basis of the sections as defined in this study, corresponds closely to the percentages secured from the analysis of the 1,882 cases: Section I, 36.8; Section II, 23.4; Section III, 9.7; Section IV, 5.8; and Section V, 24.9. (Tabulated by the staff of the Family Composition Study under the direction of E. W. Burgess and Ruth P. Koshuk.)

A pattern of distribution similar to that secured in the 1,882 cases was found in a study by sections of the proportion of the population in Chicago receiving any form of public relief made by the Illinois Emergency Relief Commission in October, 1934. The most dense area was the section surrounding the Loop and the least dense was in the outskirts of the city. The largest proportion of the population on relief was found in foreign, industrial, and colored sections. The area of greatest density was in the subcommunity located south of Roosevelt Road and west of the Chicago River, where over half of the people were on relief.


PERMANENT RESIDENCES
PER 1,000 ADULT MALES
Key
Rate
Section
100.6
I
28.3
II
29.8
III
9.5
IV
6.2
V
V-a
V-b
V-c
3200 N
2400 N
1200 N
1200 S
2600 S
3200 S
5500 S
3200 W
2400 W
1200 W
DEARBORN
COTTAGE GROVE

rary residences it was possible to determine the extent of the movement from desirable residential neighborhoods to Hobohemia. In other words, a comparison of the permanent and temporary residences assists one in answering the question, "Did the depression first force the steady self-supporting workman to leave a good neighborhood and take up his residence in Hobohemia, and then later force him from the paid flophouses of Hobohemia into the public shelters?"[7] The comparison of temporary and permanent addresses by the sections defined previously is presented in the table on page 33.

From this table it is evident that subsequent to the depression and unquestionably on account of the depression there was a movement from better residential sections to Hobohemia but that the movement was not very great. Although 38 per cent entered the shelters after a residence in Hobohemia, 28 per cent had resided there permanently and thus only 10 per cent had been forced to leave better residential areas and enter Hobohemia before coming to the shelters.

The table shows that while the outer zone, particularly the South side, had the greatest decrease from permanent to temporary residences, the next zones (Sections II and IV) likewise had decreases. It is possible that persons on the outer zone moved to the next cheaper zone, or Section IV,

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[7] About half of the earliest reported or permanent addresses began after 1929, and thus were depression residences. Therefore, it was felt that the inclusion of these cases in which the permanent address began after 1929 might tend to distort the picture of where the men had lived prior to the depression. To check on this, those cases were selected from both open and closed samples where the earliest reported address began prior to 1929. This made possible a comparison of the pre- and post-depression residences. On the basis of this selection the results were practically identical with those where the larger samples were used.

COMPARISON OF PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF PERMANENT AND TEMPORARY RESIDENCES OF 1,882 OPEN CASES BY SECTIONS OF THE CITY

Section	Permanent	Temporary	Increase or Decrease
I Inside 1200 block on N., S., and W.	28.21	37.57	+9.36
I-a Tracts bordering on three main streets	*23.50*	*31.00*	*+7.50*
I-b Inside 1200 N., S., and W., with exclusion of Section I-a	*4.71*	*6.57*	*+1.86*
II Outside of 1200 N., S., W., and inside 2400 N., and W., and 2600 S.	25.24	23.70	—1.54
III 2600 S. to 5500 S. and Dearborn to Cottage Grove	11.21	12.01	+0.80
IV Inside 3200 N., S., and W., to boundaries of Sections II and III	6.38	4.46	—1.92
V Outside 3200 block and Section III	28.96	22.26	—6.70
V-a North of 3200 N. to city limits	*4.36*	*3.72*	*—0.64*
V-b South of 3200 N. and west of 3200 W. to city limits	*5.15*	*3.61*	*—1.54*
V-c South of 3200 S. and east of 3200 W. to city limits excluding III	*19.45*	*14.93*	*—4.52*
Total	100.00*	100.00*	

* Does not include the italicized figures which are sub-divisions of the total figure for that section.

that still more moved from Section IV into the next inner zone, leaving a net loss in Section IV, and thus the movement continued until the only zone to show a significant net increase was the inner zone of flophouses.

This high degree of correspondence between the perma-

nent and temporary residences of the men is corroborated by the high correlation of .884 between the permanent and temporary rates for the seventy-five community areas. It was found that there was a considerable movement of the men from census tract to census tract in search of cheaper rents but that there was little movement from community to community. In other words, the men in general went directly to the shelters from the community in which they had lived for a considerable period. For most of those living outside the flophouse area the road to the shelters did not lead through Hobohemia.

Characteristics of the Shelter Men

Statistics regarding the twenty thousand homeless men in Chicago were secured from three annual reports of the shelters and from the following special schedules and tests: schedules regarding occupations, wages, and education filled out by 8,000 men under the direction of clerks; 400 life histories secured by sociologists; 265 life histories secured by psychiatrists; and 740 Army Beta Intelligence Tests.[8]

From these sources the following picture of the typical homeless man in the shelters has been developed: He is a man who secured a meager education, became an unskilled laborer at an early age, and continued that type of labor throughout life. He has been a hard and relatively steady

[8] In each of these four investigations efforts were made to secure a random sample of the shelter population, but the sampling procedure was not rigorous, and rough approximation to a random sample is the best that may be expected. The 8,000 schedules and the 740 intelligence tests were administered in a formal manner, while the life histories were secured in informal conversations which averaged about two hours each, with a number of them continued for several weeks.

worker but during the greater part of his life has been largely isolated from normal social contacts. After this career he finds himself, at the age of forty-five, beyond the age of employment in competitive industry, a dependent in a shelter.

This picture of the typical homeless man is incomplete as to details, fails to reveal the wide variations from the type, and fails to show the processes by which the final status of homeless dependency was reached. Some of these defects are corrected in the following elaboration of the family and community backgrounds, education, isolation from family and other social groups, economic struggles, health, intelligence, and psychopathic and other personal characteristics.

Family and community backgrounds. About 20 per cent of the shelter men were born in Chicago, 30 per cent in other parts of the United States, and 50 per cent in foreign countries. The fathers of 34 per cent of the men were farmers, generally of the serf-peasant type, and the fathers of an additional 29 per cent were unskilled laborers. This makes a total of 63 per cent, or nearly two-thirds, with low standards of living, where opportunities for advancement and development were relatively restricted.[9] The percentage of men not on relief who had a similarly low origin is not known, but it is probably far less than in the shelter group.

Education. The shelter population as a whole is handicapped by lack of education. The average shelter man left school at the age of 13 after attaining five and a half grades. Of these men 99.5 per cent did not attend college, 96 per cent did not graduate from high school, 87 per cent did not

[9] Places of birth were found substantially as described in all of the annual reports and in the life histories. Occupations of parents are based on 400 life histories.

attend high school, 61 per cent did not reach the eighth grade, and 11 per cent did not enter school at all.[10] The actual educational attainments of the men are probably less than presented above; the statistics were based on the unverified statements of the men, who probably exaggerated their educational attainments.

Isolation from family and other groups. The process of isolation from normal group life began at an early age. Before the age of 15, 36 per cent had lost their fathers by death and 33 per cent had lost their mothers; 16 per cent left the parental homes before reaching the age of 15. The typical homeless man left school at the age of 13 to enter an occupation, and at the age of 19.8 years he left the parental home. Since leaving home over 50 per cent have had little or no contact with the parental families, and an additional 30 per cent have had only occasional contacts with them.[11]

The original family ties having been severed, marriage was not the next step, for the majority remained single. Of 400 men interviewed most intensively, 66.5 per cent reported that they had never been married; this percentage varied from 48.0 per cent for Negroes to 80.0 per cent for foreign-born white men. Other questionnaires and schedules have shown the percentage of shelter men who have never married to be somewhat similar to this. The proportion who have married is probably greater than these figures indicate, since homelessness is a technical prerequisite for admission to the shelter and family desertion is concealed. The principal

[10] Based on 8,000 schedules.
[11] Based on 400 cases.

reasons given by the men for remaining single were economic insecurity and lack of contact with proper girls.

Of those who admitted that they had married, practically all have been isolated from their families by death of wife, divorce, or separation. The average marriage endured about 10 years and terminated about 13.5 years prior to the beginning of this study.[12] Consequently isolation from the family was not due primarily to the depression, for in most cases it began long before the depression.

The men were isolated, also, from almost all other social groups. Contact with the church was almost universal in childhood, but did not continue long after departure from the parental home. Few close personal friendships developed. In general, the shelter man is a homeless and friendless person, relatively isolated from all social contacts of an intimate and personal nature, and this unattachment has been characteristic of his life since he left the parental home.[13] These statistics indicate that unattachment is due in large part to breaks in the parental homes, to immigration, and to the economic status of the men.

Age. The average shelter man is about 45 years of age. This is highly significant in the explanation of their dependency, for it means that half of them have passed the age at which they can secure jobs in competitive industry in normal times: they are too old at 45, though they would be

[12] Based on 274 cases in which previous marriage was admitted.

[13] According to a tabulation of 1,258 registrants in 1932, 33.4 per cent had had no contact by correspondence or otherwise with families or other relatives within 5 years. Of the same group 15.8 per cent lived with members of their families or other relatives, and 20.8 per cent with friends before they applied for relief at the shelters. (Robert W. Beasley, *Men in the Crucible: A Report of the Clearing House for Men, 1931-1932, Chicago,* p. 46.)

working for 20 years longer in an agrarian society. In fact, 96 per cent of them are between the ages of 20 and 65. Only 2 per cent are under 20 years of age, and 2 per cent over 65. Hence they do not to a very great extent present a problem of immature childhood or helpless old age.[14]

The absence of youth in Chicago shelters does not mean that there are few dependent homeless youths. Many boys have become transients in recent years, but most of them are cared for in the federal transient shelters and in CCC camps, which are not included in this study. An additional reason for not including a detailed analysis of transient boys in this study is that studies of this group have been made by others.[15]

Nativity and nationality. About 50 per cent of the men were born in America, 40 per cent being white and 10 per cent colored. The other 50 per cent gave a foreign country as the place of birth.[16] It is probable that there are more foreign-born in the shelters than this indicates, since some foreign-born men in fear of deportation report that they are native-born. The Polish men are more numerous than men of any other foreign nationality. Although it is difficult to secure a control group for comparison, it is probable that the foreign-born men are over-represented in the shelters and

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[14] The annual reports, the schedules, and the life histories agree approximately on this distribution of ages of men in the Chicago shelters. The reported ages are probably lower than the real ages, since the older men understate their ages when they enter the shelters in order to have a better opportunity to secure employment.

[15] A. W. McMillen, "Migrant Boys: Some Data from Salt Lake City," *Social Service Rev.* 7:64-83, March, 1933; A. W. McMillen, "Army of Boys on the Loose," *Survey* 63:388-393, Sept. 1, 1932; Thomas Minehan, *Boy and Girl Tramps of America,* New York, 1934; George E. Outland, "Sources of Transient Boys," *Sociology and Social Research,* 19:429-434, May, 1935.

[16] Based on annual reports of the shelters.

that among the foreign-born the Polish are especially over-represented.

Occupational level. The shelter population is composed largely of unskilled workers, and these were the first to suffer from technological changes and the industrial curtailments of the depression. Unskilled labor of a casual, migratory, or relatively steady type was the principal occupation of 78 per cent of the men; skilled labor of 15 per cent; and clerical, business, and professional of 7 per cent.[17] Though these percentages are not reliable within several points, they probably do not greatly distort the actual distribution of the occupations.

Wages and employment. The average weekly wage in the last job for all groups was about $25, and the wage in the job next to the last was approximately the same. The average weekly wage reported for unskilled labor on the last job was $23, for semi-skilled labor $27, for skilled labor $51, for clerical labor $33, for professional work $51, and for own business $45.[18] The average duration of the last job, excluding the odd jobs secured during the period of unemployment, was 4.4 years; it was slightly more than this for those with higher wages and less than this for those with lower wages.[19] It is probable that the wages and the duration of the jobs were exaggerated, but even so, it is apparent

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[17] Based on 8,000 cases.

[18] Based on annual reports of the shelters and 8,000 schedules.

[19] Based on 400 cases. Substantially the same distribution in 8,000 cases. The "duration of the last job" was defined primarily with reference to the type of work. If a man worked as a track laborer each of the last 10 years and the season lasted 6 months, it would be classified here as a job of 5 years' duration, even though he might have worked for different railways during that period and even though he might have been unemployed each year during the 6 months he was not working at track labor.

that the shelter population is composed of men who received low wages and consequently were unable to make provision for a prolonged industrial depression.

Unemployment. The average man had resided in the shelter for 1.6 years at the time of the interviews, and had been unemployed for 2 years before entering the shelter. The interval between the last regular employment and application for admission to the shelters was 2.5 years for skilled laborers, 1.6 for professional and business men, and 1.8 years for unskilled laborers. No long periods of previous unemployment were reported by 62 per cent of the men, relatively long periods of unemployment by 26 per cent, and unemployment between the seasons of the work in which they engaged by 12 per cent.[20]

Occupational level and wages in relation to education. The educational attainments of the men are closely related to their occupational levels. The proportion of men who engaged in skilled work or in business and clerical work increased with each additional year spent in school. Of those who had no formal education 85 per cent were engaged in unskilled labor, of those with an eighth grade education 57 per cent, and of those with 4 years of high school only 27 per cent. In other words, only 15 per cent of the men with no formal education attained an occupational level higher than unskilled labor, while 43 per cent of those with an eighth grade education and 73 per cent of those with a high school education attained higher occupational levels. Furthermore, only 0.5 per cent of those with no formal education reached the clerical-business-professional level,

[20] Based on 400 cases.

while 6 per cent of those with an eighth grade education and 38 per cent of those with a high school education did so.

The wages received by the men during their last jobs and the jobs before the last were closely related to their educational attainments. The average wage on the last job was $23 for those with less than second grade education and $37 for those with some college education. The wage increased rather consistently with educational attainments, the increase amounting in general to about $1.00 a week for each additional grade. According to one theory, the lack of education is the explanation of the low wages; according to another theory, the underlying deficiency in intelligence is the explanation.

Mobility. Approximately 40 per cent of the shelter men have been relatively transient during life, and 60 per cent have been relatively stable.[21] Among the relatively stable are included persons who engaged in seasonal occupations which required mobility, such as track labor or harvesting, provided they used one city somewhat consistently as headquarters. If such seasonal laborers are classified as mobile, certainly more than half of the shelter population have been relatively foot-loose. Moreover, the transients are underrepresented in the Chicago shelters, since the federal transient shelters are not included in this study. While there is no precise measure by which to compare the mobility of the shelter men with that of other groups, it is evident that shelter men rank high in mobility.

A special analysis was made of the mobility of 115 Negroes in the Chicago shelters. A considerable proportion

[21] Based on 400 cases.

of these migrated from farms and villages in the heart of the Black Belt, leaving home at an average age of 16 when they had about a fourth grade education. Their movements generally constituted a criss-cross pattern, first within their own states, then becoming interstate, and finally resulting in a trip to a northern city and settlement there. This mobility was generally in connection with track labor and construction work. In addition, many Negroes secured jobs as Pullman porters, or waiters on diners. Thus enticed away from their parental home by types of labor which required mobility, these Negroes reached Chicago and here found few opportunities for employment and few relatives to assist them in their present economic crisis.

Health. Information regarding health was secured in interviews, generally without physical examinations. Those who were chronically or temporarily sick had been removed to infirmaries and were not available for interviews. Consequently the health of the men is probably much worse than represented. According to these interviews, about 4 per cent of the men were incapacitated for hard labor by chronic or frequent illness and about 30 per cent by organic handicaps and difficulties, such as loss of limb, partial blindness or deafness, and hernia.[22]

Mental health. Psychiatric examinations based on interviews averaging about two hours in length were made of 265 men, selected as nearly as possible as a random sample. The psychiatrists reported that 5 per cent of those examined gave such indications of psychosis that transfer to the Psychopathic Hospital was recommended. In addition, they classi-

[22] Based on 400 sociological schedules and 265 psychiatric schedules.

fied 10 per cent as "pre-psychotic," "potentially psychotic," or "question of psychosis," and 3 per cent as "neurotic," "constitutional psychopathic inferior," or "psychopathic personality," leaving 82 per cent who presented no problem of psychosis, neurosis, or psychopathic personality. It is probable that this under-estimates the proportion of shelter men who are psychopathic, because those men who were discovered in earlier months to be psychopathic had been transferred to the state hospitals. On the other hand, it is possible that in some cases the psychopathy is a result of shelter life rather than a cause of homeless dependency.

Intelligence. The mean score on Army Beta Mental Tests of 740 men, constituting as far as possible a random sample, was 41.7; this gives a mental age of 11.0 years, which is equivalent to a grade placement of 5.1. This is very close to the average school grade attained, as reported by the men on the schedules.

The distribution of scores, in comparison with the Draft Army, is shown in the following table, which indicates that

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF INTELLIGENCE SCORES OF 740 SHELTER MEN IN COMPARISON WITH DRAFT ARMY

Rating	Shelter	Army
Superior (A, B)	0.4	12.0
Average (C+, C, C—)	37.7	61.5
Inferior (D, D—)	61.9	26.5
Total	100.0	100.0

the shelter population had a much larger proportion of inferior ratings than the Draft Army did, and a much smaller proportion of average and superior ratings.

The inferiority of the shelter population may be explained, in part, by the larger representation of unskilled laborers, of immigrants, of men with defective vision, and of older men in the shelters. It may also be explained by the lack of motivation; during their stay in the shelters the men had been subjected to frequent questionnaires and many men had an antagonistic attitude toward filling out anything which resembled a questionnaire.

The high average age of shelter men seems to be significant, for the intelligence ratings of men over 45 years of age were appreciably lower than of those under 45 years of age. The mean score of the older group was 34.6, of the younger group 49.9, and it decreases steadily with age, as appears in the following table:

Distribution of Scores on Army Beta Tests of 740 Residents of Shelters, by Ten-Year Age Groups

Chronological Age	Number	Mean Beta Score
10-19	27	66.7
20-29	60	50.0
30-39	163	41.9
40-49	258	38.1
50-59	162	34.4
60-69	60	27.0
70 and over	10	14.7

Since other studies have generally shown slight change in scores with age, the distribution of scores of men in the shelters in relation to chronological age raises problems of interpretation. It is certain that the younger group has a larger proportion of native-born persons, a higher educational attainment, better vision, and more motivation than the older group.

Personality. The investigators who were in constant association with the men for a period of a year formed certain impressions regarding traits of personality in regard to which no statistical data were available.

Temper was one of the traits observed by the investigators and frequently mentioned by the men themselves as a source of their difficulties. Many jobs were abandoned because they "got mad and quit." "When 1929 came along I got laid off from the street car company. I wouldn't have lost it but I refused to do some other work they wanted me to do for a short time and in a little fit of temper I threw the job." The occasions for this reaction were numerous, some real and some imagined. These men have resented advice, instructions, criticisms, efforts at exploitation, and other conditions of their employment. In some cases they were dismissed because, when angry, they destroyed machinery or materials on which they were working.

In other cases the failure of a man to restrain his anger was due to the fact that he had no persons dependent on him. A man who was employed in a sandwich shop was criticized by the manager who dropped in at three o'clock one morning and found this employee drinking beer with two or three friends. He quit the job because of the criticism. He had been divorced shortly before this and his wife had secured the custody of the children. When asked whether he would have quit his job if his wife and children had been dependent on him he replied, "No, I don't think I would. I swallowed stuff as bad as that before. If I had my wife and kids it would have been a different story. Then it's not one but three you got to think about and feed." On other

occasions, however, wife and children and other dependents were not an effective inhibition to such expressions of anger. A salesman for a bakery believed that the manager was taking credit for the orders which the salesman secured and when a particularly obvious case occurred he quit immediately. He explained his action thus: "I'm bull-headed, I tell you. After that, I didn't think about nothing. I was through with that place. Wife and kids? I didn't care. He wasn't gonna get away with that. Who the hell's thinking about the future when a guy screws you up before your face? He couldn't get away with that."

Breaks in family life also frequently result from the same emotions. Again and again the men reported that they "got mad and left home." The occasions for their departure were trivial, which indicates that the family ties were probably not strong.

Many of these men have squandered their money on drink, gambling, and women. Though they generally received low wages for very hard work, many of them went on sprees every pay-day or as soon as an opportunity arose. The migratory laborers came to the city at the end of the season and within a few days many of them were penniless. Frugality and saving did not seem to be among their virtues. The average homeless man, in fact, would not have known how to make a deposit in a bank or to buy a bond.

Many of the former family men, however, had accumulated some property; some had bank accounts, made investments in the market, or owned, in whole or in part, the homes in which they lived. In a sample of 100 cases 32 reported that at some time in life they had had savings, the

average for the 32 being $1,086. In the same sample 26 had at some time during life held life insurance policies, the average being $1,247.

Lack of initiative is regarded as characteristic of shelter men. Since they have worked under orders throughout life and have had few occasions for making original decisions, they have had little experience in taking the initiative in any situation.

There are several difficulties involved in appraising the characteristics of the shelter men as described above. The men who were in the shelters at the time of this study were a selected group of all who had entered the shelters. Only 20,000 men were residing in the shelters in March, 1934, whereas 100,000 had entered the shelters during the preceding three years. The older, less educated, foreign-born, and Negro men remain in the shelters longer; the younger, better educated, native-born, and white men get out of the shelters more quickly. For instance, only 18 per cent of those who resided in the shelters in March, 1934, were under 35 years of age, as compared with 28 per cent of those who had withdrawn.

A second difficulty in appraising these characteristics is the lack of adequate comparisons with non-shelter men. Should shelter men be compared with the entire adult male population or with the adult male population of the same nativities and occupational levels? Should the control group be taken from certain areas of Chicago, from the entire city of Chicago, from the entire state of Illinois, or from some wider area? Even if a control group could be defined, comparable statistics on many points are lacking.

Moreover, the traits of shelter men are consistent with any one of the general theories outlined above. It has not been possible in this survey, if it is ever possible, to separate the effects of heredity from the effects of experience, or the personal factors from the broader social situations. Because of these difficulties it is not possible to arrive at a simple explanation of the shelter men.

Nevertheless, this survey does give a general picture of characteristics which, in one connection or another, in the absence of a control group, appear to be important in determining shelter entrance. Men who enter the shelter have in common the characteristics of destitution, homelessness, and willingness under the circumstances to accept relief. In turn, these three characteristics, in a large proportion of cases, are symptoms and products of the social and economic inefficiency of the particular individuals. The inefficiency is indicated by the large proportions of shelter men who had little education, had worked at unskilled occupations, and had received low wages. Their efficiency had been impaired by old age, organic handicaps, psychopathies, defective intelligence, uncontrolled emotions, and alcoholism. Their meager earnings were frequently wasted in extravagant dissipation.

These forms of personal inefficiency may in turn be traced in many instances to the general disorganization in modern society. These situational factors can be seen in the several stages of the life of the individual. The men had frequently been deprived of their parents at an early age. Their families and communities had made little provision for education that would prepare them for the complex and difficult life of the modern city. In a large proportion of cases these men had

been torn from the stimulating and directing influences of intimate family and community life and had either become migratory or had resided in sections of the city where stable and organized community influences were lacking. While they were compelled to be mobile in order to meet the demands of industry, no provision was made by industry or by the general society to counteract the demoralizing effects of mobility. Those men who by frugal habits had accumulated some savings were in little better condition than the men who had wasted their earnings, for the savings had been depleted in former periods of unemployment or in the earlier years of the depression, or had been lost in bank failures or depreciated investments. Thus we find that modern society has not been organized or planned for the satisfaction of the basic needs of a great mass of the population, from which the homeless men in the shelters have come as representatives.

CHAPTER III

TYPES OF HOMELESS MEN

Homeless men at the time of shelter entrance do not form a homogeneous group. On the contrary, like other human beings, they display a wide range of traits. When one of their traits is analyzed in isolation from all other traits, it shows variations which form a continuum with no distinct divisions into types. This has been shown in the previous chapter in regard to such traits as age, education, and mentality. On the other hand, when several traits are considered together they often form clusters which have some consistency and which furnish a logical basis for a classification of shelter men into types.

These clusters of traits seem to be most closely related to the previous occupations of the men and are consequently described in relation to occupations. When men first apply to the shelters for relief they may be said to fall into the following types: bums, home guard casuals, migratory laborers, steady unskilled laborers, skilled tradesmen, and white collar workers.

Comparison of Types

A statistical comparison of these groups with reference to a few external characteristics serves the purpose of differentiating the types and also provides some justification for this classification. For it is found that the types differ very significantly in respect to place of birth, marital status, and average age at death of parents. These external differences

shown in the analysis[1] are certainly indicative of other more subtle differences.

Foreign nativity is closely associated with casual, migratory, and unskilled labor, as appears in the following table:

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF TYPES OF SHELTER MEN BY NATIVITY

Type	Number of Cases	Per Cent	
		Native-Born	Foreign-Born
Home guard casual	45	31.1	68.9
Migratory laborers	46	23.9	76.1
Steady unskilled	91	49.5	50.5
Skilled tradesmen	60	71.7	28.3
White collar workers	78	78.2	21.8

The percentage of foreign-born men who reached the higher occupational levels is relatively small, of native-born relatively large. Though the absolute numbers are small, the percentage changes with a steady progression from one occupational level to another.

The five types of shelter men differ significantly in their average age at the death of mother and of father. Men who became home guard casuals or migratory laborers lost their fathers by death at the age of seventeen, while those who became skilled tradesmen or white collar workers did not lose their fathers by death until the age of twenty-six; the mothers of the first group died about two years later than the fathers, and the mothers of the second group died about one year later than the fathers. Thus, the men who reached

[1] The statistical analysis is based on 320 life history schedules. The bums do not appear in the tables in this section, since they were not definitely isolated in the schedules. Also, Negroes are not included in these statistical comparisons.

the higher occupational levels had the assistance of parents, on the average, approximately ten years longer than those who did not rise above the lower occupational levels.

The five types of shelter men differ, also, in regard to marital status. Of the home guard casuals 18 per cent had been married, of the migratory laborers 11 per cent, of the steady unskilled workers 24 per cent, of the skilled workers 55 per cent, and of the white collar workers 53 per cent. Here again a progression is evident, for the percentage of men who had been married is significantly higher in the upper occupational levels. This indicates that homelessness is related to economic status. Moreover, the real differences are probably greater than these statistics indicate, since men on the upper occupational levels are more inclined to conceal previous marriages.

The Bum

A comparatively small number, perhaps 5 per cent, of the men are bums when they first apply for shelter relief.[2] A bum is a person of degraded social status, who has no pride in personal appearance, who will not work except on rare occasions, and whose desires are limited almost entirely to eating, drinking, and sleeping. They are regarded as the lowest element in Hobohemia. For many years they have been found sleeping on the floors of saloons and gambling houses, or spending the winter in jails or in county homes.

The confirmed drunkard in Hobohemia is regarded as a bum. He is a ragged, ill-smelling, bewhiskered person. His

[2] As shown in Chapter VII, many men become bums after they enter the shelters.

clothes are old and filthy; often he has no socks; his shoes are worn and may not be mates; his pockets may be filled with paper and rags and perhaps a little food. He picks up garbage for food and is known as a "swill barrel buzzard." He often collects paper, junk, and bottles which he sells and then buys moonshine. He may stagger as he walks, but often he just oozes along.

Mission stiffs are a second sub-class of bums according to the standards of Hobohemia. This epithet is given to men who habitually hang around the missions, securing meals and lodgings regularly in return for periodic conversions. On the other hand, persons who patronize missions occasionally for the purpose of "getting a bowl of soup and a night's flop from these grafters" but who do not make this a regular method of livelihood are not regarded as mission stiffs and may not be bums.

Professional beggars are a third sub-class of bums. Strictly speaking, the professional beggar is not a bum, for he *works* at his profession while the bum is a man who will not work. But the professional beggar has many of the characteristics of the bum and is therefore included as a bum. The professional beggar class does not include persons who occasionally resort to begging but do not make it a business.

Beggars are classified according to Hobohemian standards into four groups: main stem stiffs, who beg for money on the streets; moochers or back door stiffs, who beg for food; house cats, who beg for old clothes; and peddler panhandlers, who sell shoestrings, pencils, and razor blades, not with the purpose of sales but with the hope of having money given to them. Each of these groups has a developed tech-

nique of begging. Two common methods are "the buddy act," which is a plea for help on the basis of being a war veteran, and "the union card act," which consists in using a union card as the basis of a plea.

The following excerpt from the statement of a professional panhandler illustrates the standard of living and attitudes of this group: "I live here in this cage joint [a cheap hotel]. Most of the beds are all saggy, plenty of bed bugs, and cheap help don't keep it very clean. But I guess it is as good as these lodging houses go. It is a lot better than the shelters. I have been in a shelter a couple of times but you have to go to bed at a certain time, eat at a certain time, and get up at a certain time. I like the independence which comes from living here in this lodging house. Of course bumming is a little tough now and it will probably get worse as the winter goes on, so I expect I'll have to go back to the shelter in January. But, believe me, I would rather bum than live in a shelter."

This attitude of independence and opposition to regimentation is typical of professional beggars. Consequently comparatively few of them are found in the shelters.

The Home Guard Casual

The home guard casual is a person who works at odd jobs while maintaining a somewhat permanent residence in a particular city. In this group are included bill peddlers, dock wallopers or stevedores, pearl divers or dish washers, and waiters in cheap restaurants. They constitute approximately a fifth of the shelter population. This group, in general, is

anxious to work and therefore does not include the bums who, as a last resort, occasionally work at odd jobs.[3]

For this group of home guard casuals work is intermittent even in years of prosperity. Because of this, the home guard casual is familiar with periods of unemployment which may extend into weeks or even months. These men learn many ways of securing small jobs which are completely unknown to the man in middle-class society.

The earnings from odd jobs are frequently spent in sprees. A home guard casual describes his life as follows: "For a good many years I have been here on West Madison Street. I did odd jobs in a barrel-house saloon. I'd average about a dollar and a half a day. Usually got paid at night and bought some booze. If I wasn't drunk the next day, I'd go to work again. When I got tired of drinking, I'd go out and take a job maybe for several weeks and sober up. And in this way I kept going until I came to the shelter."

Due to the intermittent work, low wages, and dissipation of earnings, the standard of living of this group was extremely low. The home guard casual seldom pays more than twenty-five cents a day for a room, but he may sleep in a ten-cent flophouse or even in a hallway. He seldom pays more than twenty cents for a meal, but he may secure food for several days for twenty cents. He buys his clothes in the second-hand clothing stores in Hobohemia at an extremely low cost. He retains some pride in personal appearance and is seldom as dirty as the bum, but when it becomes necessary

[3] The term "home guard floater," which is a conventional designation in Hobohemia, includes the non-migratory bums, beggars, and casuals. In order to distinguish between the bum-and-beggar type and those home guard floaters who really want to work, the term "home guard casual" is used in this book.

he can accept filth and vermin without much hesitation. Thus, in general, he adapts to situations which most people would consider impossible.

Relief does not come as a shock to home guard casuals. For years they were constantly on the margin of dependency. While they may really search for work, they feel no shame in going from store to store to ask for food or other necessities. Though some of them shy away from promiscuous begging on the street, they are not averse to asking charity organizations for food and lodging or dispensaries for medical care. They have the attitude, "Whatever that bunch of grafters gives you is coming to you. They are in it for the dough and aren't giving away something for nothing." They may go periodically to the missions for hand-outs but they look down upon those who patronize the missions regularly. Acceptance of charitable relief is not an infraction of the code of this group, especially if done with the intent of beating the public out of something.

Home guard casuals are relatively isolated individuals with few intimate personal relationships. Communal feeling and cooperation are almost unknown. The common attitude is, "You take care of number one and so will I," or "Pals?" which is uttered with a rising inflection of the voice and a gesture indicating the cutting of the throat. The nearest approach to group loyalty is seen in their racial and national prejudices. Native-white casual laborers have an intense prejudice against Negroes and foreigners who compete with them for jobs.

Thus the characteristic traits of home guard casuals are: intermittent work habits, permanent residence in a particular

city, extremely low standard of living, ability to adjust to extremely difficult situations, willingness to accept charity, and personal isolation.

The Migratory Laborer

Migratory laborers are about a fifth of the total shelter population. They are gandy dancers [railway track laborers], harvest hands, and lumber jacks. They may ship from the city to a community where work is available, remain there until the job is completed, and then return to the city.

Migratory laborers differ from home guard casuals in that they are migratory, have jobs of longer duration, and consequently work more steadily. Also, a considerable portion of them live outside of Hobohemia, staying with friends or relatives in the foreign settlements of the city. They have more attachments to people but in comparison with higher occupational classes are largely isolated from personal friends and relatives. They are more frugal than the home guard casuals, for a few of them send money to relatives in Europe, some accumulate savings, and most of them pay their room rent for considerable periods in advance when they first return from the season's work.

On the other hand, they resemble the home guard casuals in many respects. In fact, many men are migratory laborers during the summer and home guard casuals during the winter. They are accustomed to low standards of living, for many of them live during the working season in bunk houses and construction camps and during the winter in the flophouses of Hobohemia. While they generally refrain from begging on the streets, they do not hesitate to beg for food

or to sleep in the missions. Many of them celebrate their return to the city by a prolonged spree and thus dissipate the savings from the working season.

The Steady Unskilled Laborer

Steady unskilled laborers who have worked in mills, factories, mines, and stockyards constitute about a third of the shelter population. During most of their lives they have worked steadily at common labor and have made relatively few changes in occupations or in the communities in which they resided. A few of them have worked for twenty or twenty-five years for one company. They have been independent, self-supporting, hard-working, and frugal throughout life. To be a "good worker" has been their chief ambition and pride.

This attitude toward work is revealed in the following statement which, even though it may be in part fantasy, shows the work ideals of the group: "I was born in Poland. We were very poor and I had to work from early morning till late at night. I was not afraid to work. I liked to work. I remember one time my father told me to do something that he knew I could not do. Do you think I didn't try to do it? I worked at it until finally my mother and father begged me to come to bed. But I kept right on working. I worked until my people went for the village priest. He came and sprinkled holy water around me and sang a song around me, for all the people of my village thought that I had the devil in me. If I hadn't fallen asleep I might of been on the job until I fell dead. Since I came to this country I haven't forgotten how I worked when people tried to make me quit

working. I have been in Chicago twenty years. I always worked, and if I had an education I would have been a worth-while man."

These unskilled workers felt that since they were uneducated, they were destined to the level of unskilled work and they have made little or no effort to improve themselves. Consequently they have generally been docile and non-aggressive, and have been relatively reluctant to fight against exploitation.

While their meager wages never permitted them to save much money, they have generally been thrifty and frugal. But their savings on a particular job were generally used up in the slack seasons. A considerable proportion of them, however, have been accustomed to dissipating their savings through occasional drinking sprees.

The Skilled Worker

About 15 per cent of the men who enter the shelter had previously been skilled tradesmen. Of these, a small number were men sixty years of age or more, who, after a stable life and steady employment, found it impossible to work longer at their trades and consequently drifted into casual work. Another small group of skilled workers, averaging about forty-five years of age, have been displaced as a result of technological changes or the depression, and have found it impossible to get work at their trades. The largest number of skilled workers have had a relatively long period of deterioration as the result of crises in their personal lives; consequently they have worked at their trades intermittently or have fallen to a lower economic level.

Skilled workers, in general, were reared in homes in which the standard of living was relatively high. The fathers of many of them were skilled tradesmen or small business men. The skilled workers have generally maintained a high standard of living. Their clothes were of good quality and they had pride in their appearance. They appreciated and insisted on good food. Many of them have been married. They supported themselves by their own efforts and had the traditional contempt of dependency; they were the kind who "would rather die than take charity." They had a high opinion of and respect for themselves.

These skilled workers have become dependent men not only because of the unemployment of the last decade, but also because of different types of personal crises. A small group, who had accumulated enough to provide for old age, lost their savings in bank failures and in depreciated investments. Another group now attribute their dependency to their lack of frugality. Many had the ideal of a good time through free spending on liquor, women, and gambling. Mr. Mango, an expert fur cutter, who for many years received from $200 to $300 a month, states: "Since 1919 I have been living on the Near North Side. I don't want to brag, but I dressed well, good style and good quality of clothes. I spent money freely, entertaining and drinking with my friends. Although I wasn't married, I had my own women when I had the money."

By far the largest part of the skilled workers who reached the shelters had personal characteristics which interfered with a steady career. While they have not been as unstable as home guard casuals and migratory laborers, they have

changed jobs frequently for reasons other than general economic changes. Their instability generally involved migratory habits, alcoholism, or sexual and domestic troubles.

Many of the skilled workers were aggressively and belligerently individualistic, and refused to accept a subservient rôle. According to their own confessions they were touchy, quick-tempered, bull-headed, and argumentative. The life history of Harold Olson is an excellent illustration of this type. "Throughout my life I have had too much of an independent spirit. Having had a squabble with my step-mother, I stayed away from home two months. When I was fourteen she threatened to whip me, and I backed her against the wall with her hands above her head and told her, 'Your whipping days are over.' When I was seventeen I had a regular fist fight with my father. My dad could fight, and we had it hot and heavy. I felt sorry afterwards, but I left home and lived with a friend for a couple of weeks. One time I lammed hell out of my brother who was several years older than me.

"I was domineering with my first wife and would not tolerate anyone interfering with my affairs—right or wrong, I wouldn't tolerate it. I could have gone along with her dad if I had been diplomatic, and I was told so by a very close friend of the family. But I said, 'I won't have him fussing or interfering with my affairs.' When my wife started the divorce suit, I went up to her house and saw the father-in-law; one word led to another and I took him by the neck and dragged him off the porch. I didn't hit him at all. He had a couple of rocks and he let one go at me. I got one out of his hand and tried to stuff it down his throat. After that fracas, I left.

"I used to be pretty independent in the shop, too. I would pick up my tools and walk out. I used to argue a great deal with the bosses and with some of the punk foremen about how the job should be done. I objected to the way they wanted it done. When the foreman was bull-headed and wanted me to do it a certain way and I knew my way was better, then I might pick up my tools and walk out."

In such cases maladjustments in the parental home, in their own homes, and in their economic relationships were related to their independent attitudes. While it is not possible to determine the comparative frequency of such attitudes among the skilled tradesmen who reach the shelters and those who do not reach the shelters, the research workers had a very definite impression that they were much more frequent among the skilled workers than among the steady unskilled laborers who were in the shelters.

Some skilled workers attribute their dependency to their highly trustful characteristics. They were easy-going, easily persuaded, suggestible, and gullible. They might foot the liquor bills for fair-weather friends, squander savings on an invention suggested by a friend, or simply drift along through life with little consideration of the future.

The White Collar Worker

The white collar type is composed of professional men, business men, clerks, salesmen, accountants, and men who previously held minor political positions. This type constitutes about 7 per cent of the total shelter population.

Relatively few professional men enter the shelter; they are about 0.2 per cent of the shelter population. In general,

these men had ambitions superior to their abilities, or else became deteriorated because of excessive drinking. These two characteristics largely explain their lack of success in their professions and their subsequent dependency.

The men who had been clerks or accountants gave evidence of capacity and industry. But they moved frequently from job to job, and clerking appears to be the limit of their vocational aspirations.

Most of the white collar type were business men or salesmen. These may be divided into those who engaged in legitimate activities and those who engaged in illegitimate or semi-legitimate activities. Bootlegging was a primary occupation of the illegitimate type. The case of George Tomkins is a good illustration. Since 1900 he has been a bartender, a saloon operator, and a bootlegger. He engaged in bribery of policemen and officers of the court, and even in arson. He had no hesitancy in doing these things, for "anything is right if you can get by with it." He talked of these activities in a matter-of-fact way and showed no evidence of moral conflict. He was well-to-do, but drank heavily, squandered his money, and now hopes that conditions will improve so that he can again earn his living in the old manner.

The business men and salesmen who have engaged in legitimate occupations have some characteristics which resemble those of the skilled tradesmen. They came from homes where the standard of living was high, and they themselves subsequently enjoyed a high standard of living. They were self-supporting, self-reliant, independent, and had a high degree of self-respect. They were more thrifty and stable than the skilled tradesmen and had a higher social

status. They stayed longer on a given job. They had more group contacts and personal friends and greater ability to adapt to other people. However, these men were frequently cantankerous and irritable. One of them expressed this as follows: "I may seem to be easy-going, but really I am a hard person to get along with."

These salesmen and business men had dynamic urges and were aggressive in their efforts to satisfy their desires. They chafed under economic restrictions. They felt that their positions did not give adequate room for the expression of their abilities. They craved expansion more than any other group, with the possible exception of the professional men. They had a strong desire to make money, as a symbol of success, but almost invariably had the conviction that it was impossible to make money by working and saving. Many of them used their savings to speculate in stocks. The loss of these savings in speculation frequently resulted not only in the loss of a business but also in marital discord and the disruption of the family.

They are unusually optimistic. They believe that the future will be better than the present. They regard their dependency as temporary and feel confident that their luck will change and they will become financially successful. This attitude may be either cause or effect of their exaggerated stories, for they speak of their influential relatives and of their own rapid promotion in ways that are frequently found to be purely products of their imaginations. Because of this optimistic attitude, salesmen and business men adapt themselves more easily to shelter life than do other white collar men and are not affected as much by it.

The Negro

The Negroes who enter the shelters do not constitute a distinct type coordinate with those previously described. Rather they cut across those types, ranging from bums to white collar workers. The Negro bum has many habits and attitudes in common with the white bum, and differs significantly from the Negro white collar workers. Nevertheless, the Negro shelter man differs from the white shelter man in many respects.

About a fourth of the Negroes who enter the shelters had been engaged throughout life in odd-jobs, as compared with about a tenth of the native-born or foreign-born white men. Negroes engaged in the skilled trades about one-fourth as frequently as the native-born and one-half as frequently as the foreign-born white men. They were only slightly underrepresented in the white collar occupations, having 7 per cent of their members from such occupations, as compared with 9 per cent of the native-born white and 3.5 per cent of the foreign-born men. Their white collar occupations, however, while involving some initiative and management, were generally very trivial in character.

The Negroes are approximately ten years younger than the native-born or foreign-born white men. They had about the same school advancement as the native-born white and about two grades more than the foreign-born white men. Though 98 per cent of them report that they were born in southern states, they changed their communities slightly less frequently than the native-born and considerably less frequently than the foreign-born white men. They remained more faithful to the church than either the native-born or

foreign-born white men. They have maintained contact with their families in a much larger proportion of cases than the foreign-born, and about the same as the native-born. They have contacts with friends much more frequently than either the native-born or the foreign-born white men do.

About 50 per cent of the Negroes never married, as compared with 60 per cent of the native-born and 80 per cent of the foreign-born white men. Of those who had been married, 60 per cent simply separated from their wives, as compared with 40 per cent of the foreign-born and 33 per cent of the native-born white men who thus separated.

Alcoholism and gambling disrupted the domestic and economic relationships of many Negroes, dissipated their earnings, and impeded their development. These vices have undoubtedly hastened the dependency of such Negroes, but it is probable that even without them these Negroes would have been close to the border-line of dependency and would at a later date have been compelled to enter the shelters.

Hobohemians and Non-Hobohemians

The types of shelter men which have been described fall into two general cultural groups. These are the Hobohemians and the non-Hobohemians. The Hobohemians include bums, home guard casuals, and most of the migratory laborers; the non-Hobohemians include steady unskilled laborers, skilled tradesmen, and white collar workers. Hobohemians have made their headquarters in the flophouses and lodging houses in or adjacent to Hobohemia, while non-Hobohemians have made their headquarters in the foreign settlements and other residential neighborhoods out-

side of Hobohemia. The bums, home guard casuals, and migratory laborers who constitute the "old homeless" have been a social problem for many decades; the skilled tradesmen, white collar workers, and steady unskilled laborers who are known as the "new homeless" have become dependent in recent years.

The two groups differ decidedly in their general culture and in their attitudes toward conventional standards and institutions. The men of Hobohemia are comparatively free from control by conventional standards and have much less respect for the conventional institutions than do the non-Hobohemians. The difference may be illustrated with reference to attitudes toward religion, home, and country.

The culture of Hobohemia is generally anti-religious. The missions, which are the only ecclesiastical institutions in Hobohemia, are used principally as sources of food and lodging. To the Hobohemian "home is any place I hang my hat." At the same time "mother" is the most sacred name in the vocabulary of Hobohemia and the principal profane epithets are those which reflect on the mother of another person. They have a certain patriotism, as seen in such a statement as, "If you don't like this country, why in hell don't you move out?" To them this is "God's country," "the greatest country in the world," and the radicals are "wobblies," "dirties," and "chiselers." At the same time, they are disillusioned in regard to the economic and political system, and some suggest, "Give the country back to the Indians." They are notorious for vote-selling. "I might as well give my vote to the one who will pay me the most, for what does it matter? You'll only get a rimming either way. They have

you coming and going. The poor man doesn't have a chance in this country; the cards are stacked against him. What chance has a bum got to affect the government? Even if his candidate is elected, he won't be any better off. He might as well take the half dollar for his vote."

Non-Hobohemians, on the other hand, hold more traditional and conventional views of religion, home, and country. While few of them attend church regularly, they are almost unanimous in professing a firm belief in traditional religious values. They are attached to the home and think of woman as "the noblest work of God." Patriotism is a fundamental duty and virtue. They are not inclined to blame employers or the economic system for the present depression; their economic philosophy is essentially that of the business man.

Hobohemians and non-Hobohemians thus form two relatively distinct cultural groups at the time they enter the shelters. As will be shown in Chapter VII, these groups tend to merge after a period of residence in the shelters.

Certain generalizations may be derived from this survey of the types of shelter men. The most obvious generalization is that the ability to support themselves, their standard of living, their independence, and their opposition to charity vary directly with the level of the occupation. Those on the lower economic levels were more familiar with methods of adapting themselves to situations which seem impossible, had less pride in appearance or achievement, and had little to lose by any behavior; they were accustomed to dependency and relief.

A second generalization is that the higher their economic level, the larger the proportion of the men who entered the

shelters because of personal maladjustments, such as belligerence, cantankerousness, or irritability. Almost everyone on the lower economic levels was forced into relief by the depression, and temperamental qualities seemed to have little to do with their dependency. On the higher economic levels, those who were personally well adjusted were better able to continue to support themselves, while those who had greater difficulty in adjusting themselves to others were more likely to reach the shelters.

CHAPTER IV

ROADS TO DEPENDENCY

A study of the cycles of experiences through which shelter men passed from their former ways of life to dependency in a shelter gives additional insight into the nature and causation of homeless dependency. In some cases the decline from a satisfactory and self-sustaining existence was relatively precipitous. In other cases residence in a shelter was the climax of a long history of personal disorganization. And in still other cases, the transition from independence to dependence was hardly noticeable, for these men had for many years been close to the margin of dependence, sometimes above it and sometimes below it.

Although there are obviously many roads to dependency, it will be necessary to confine the description to a few of the more important ones. In the following analysis they will be divided into those cycles of experiences which extend over a period of several years and those which immediately precede shelter entrance. While the long-term series of experiences are not sharply distinct from the short-term series, a division on this basis has a factual relationship to different types of shelter men and to their experiences in reaching dependency.

Long-Term Roads to Dependency

For many men the descent to the shelters began years ago. The factors which were involved in this long-term descent to dependency were varied and interrelated. They include economic transitions, marital and sexual problems, alcohol-

ism, physical injuries or illnesses, cultural conflict, and detachment.

Economic transitions. In their economic activities most shelter men followed one of two general patterns: marginal dependency or a long period of deterioration. For years home guard casuals and migratory workers had fluctuated back and forth across the margin of dependency. In view of the life which they had been forced to live, the shelter was the logical destination of these men. "I followed the harvest each year. Most of the time I made enough during the seven months that I worked to live the other five. Of course I had to live in cheap flophouses and often led a hand-to-mouth existence. I knew that most migratory laborers eventually landed either in the gutter or the poorhouse but I thought that I would escape that end. Sometimes I think that from the day I started work as a harvest hand until now there has been a straight line leading to this government flophouse."

Steady unskilled workers, while not fluctuating back and forth across the margin of dependency, were always perilously close to that level. These men went through a cycle of experiences somewhat as follows: Prior to the depression they worked year after year at low wages; while they may have spent ten or more years with a single company, in general they made rather frequent moves from factory to factory; their periods of employment were interspersed with periods of unemployment; as a consequence of low wages and unemployment they never acquired much financial reserve; near the beginning of the depression they lost their jobs; they then got odd jobs for a few months; possibly lived with relatives and friends, or batched with acquaintances; and finally when

odd jobs were more difficult to secure or living with friends and relatives proved undesirable, they were forced on relief. A few years ago when such men were unable to continue their regular work they could get jobs as watchmen and maintain themselves until late in life. Recently the working span of the laboring man has decreased, and the number of men looking for jobs similar to that of a watchman has greatly increased. At present, therefore, when such men are laid off they soon find themselves either bordering on dependency or actually dependent.

A long period of economic deterioration, the second general pattern of economic experience, was particularly characteristic of skilled tradesmen and white collar workers. The deterioration may have appeared in the form of either of two cycles: one began with stability and ended with instability; the other began with instability, was followed by stability, and ended with instability. In many careers these longer cycles may have been interspersed with short periods of stability and instability.

Those who were stable in the early part of life went through a period of training for a skilled trade; then occupational restlessness developed. This restlessness might have had its source in the home, in relationships with fellow workmen, in immediate superiors, the loss of a job because of a technological change, or in any untoward event which provided a basis for shifting to another job or to another geographical setting. Gradually this restlessness resulted in increased frequency of moves, and frequent moves almost inevitably meant casual or semi-casual work. When they began to engage in casual work the incentive toward mo-

bility increased, for their jobs were shorter, the work more uninteresting, and there was a feeling that a better job was to be had by moving on. With the onset of the depression the uncertainties of a life of mobility increased, the men found themselves competing with large numbers of men thrown out of their regular jobs, and jobs even of the casual type were harder to secure. Their funds were soon exhausted and they ended by applying for relief in a shelter.

Otto Jordenson was one of those who were stable in early life and later became unstable. "When I was fourteen I was an apprentice to an ornamental iron worker and learned that trade until I was twenty. I was drafted in the Danish army and was a soldier for a year. At this time I had an intention of getting married but decided to postpone it. I visited Germany, France, Switzerland, working on various jobs in these countries. When I was twenty-five I developed a real passion for traveling and I hit out on a steamer for the coast of Africa. I returned home for a couple of years but only earned $10 a week at my trade. I decided to migrate to America and came to Boston. I came on to Chicago and stayed here about four or five years and then went to San Francisco to work in the shipyards, but my job there was short for the company closed down. I spent two years traveling up and down the Pacific Coast. After that I settled in Chicago for a while. Then I moved to Omaha, only to return again to Chicago. I have been in Chicago since 1924. I was able to get by up to 1930, but when I found I couldn't make it, I had to enter a shelter."

The stable occupational life of some shelter men ended during the World War or in the depression of 1920-21.

These two events interrupted the men's regular employment, resulted in economic instability, caused them to drift into casual or semi-casual labor, and pushed them toward destitution and dependency.

Those who experienced the other type of deterioration—who were unstable in early life, later became stable, and then again became unstable—went through the following typical chronological cycle: Early in life they had itching feet and roved around the country and even the world. They then acquired a trade or entered the business field, many of them got married, became settled geographically, but moved from job to job or business to business. In the third period, as a result of some crisis, often in their marital relationships, they went on drinking sprees, moved more frequently from position to position, often reverted to their nomadic wanderings, gradually deteriorated to a lower economic status, and with the advent of the depression were in line for dependency in the shelters.

The case of James Maypole is an example of this instability-stability-instability cycle. "When I was 20 years old, I joined the Marines. I was in Japan, China, the Philippines, and the Virgin Islands, and at each place I learned more about women. Why didn't I stay and work in New York? Well, it was due to the fact that the spirit of adventure was calling and I could not settle down. After the war I got a job in a construction company and became a building mechanic. Then I worked in a tire factory. It was at this time that I got married. My wife was a fine girl. The only trouble which we had was of a sexual nature. To make a long story short, I went out with other women. I gave her a final kiss

one day and that is the last that she has seen of me. I came to Chicago and the men up and down North Clark all know Jack the Gambler. I spent more on the horses than those tin horns will ever be able to count. The horses owe me something like $10,000. If I get even with them I'll stop gambling. If not, I'll keep on gambling even if it takes the hide off my back. I'm a good building mechanic but because of my gambling on the ponies, I've not been able to hold a job. You can't play the ponies and get your proper rest and recreation; so I made up my mind not to work."

Marital and sexual problems. The dominant disorganizing experience in the lives of many of the men centered around marital difficulties and sexual maladjustments. Occupational instability, family disorganization, and general dissipation were closely related. In some cases the death of the wife started a man on the road to dependency; he not only suffered emotional disturbances but lost stability and an incentive to work. "I went to hell when my wife died. I lived with my wife for ten years. We had no children, but we got along very well together. We were exceptionally happy. After she died I kind of went to hell. I didn't give a damn whether I worked or not. Then after I lost my job I started hanging around North Clark Street, mostly around the cheap dance halls and taverns."

In other men separation or divorce was the immediate antecedent to an extended period of instability. One man when asked, "Why is it that you and not others are here in the shelter?" replied, "Bad luck and the divorce courts put me here. My first divorce cost a lot in settlement and the second took such a high alimony that I left the com-

munity to get away from the unpleasantness. This caused me to drift, and I have never had any regular work since." Such cases imply personality difficulties in the man as a preliminary to marital troubles. Faced with the necessity of paying alimony, some lost their incentive to work. Another group, learning or suspecting that their wives were unfaithful, became disorganized.

Death of the wife, divorce, or separation were often followed by either excessive drinking or promiscuous relations with women, or both. "After I had paid all the expenses of the divorce I went on a bender. I wanted to forget Ruth. But I saw her sensitive smile in the face of each woman I was with. I pretty near went screwy." A man who lost his wife and his job in the same year lamented, "It looked pretty blue. I got discouraged and disheartened. I had always been a mild drinker but then I became a regular boozer."

Some of the immigrant workers preceded their wives to America, worked hard to save money to bring over their families, only to find that their wives were unwilling to leave the old country. "The whole fault of my being in this condition lies with my wife. If she would have come to me when I had saved the money I would have kept working, saved money, maybe bought a little home, and everything would have been fine. But when I found that she wasn't going to come I said, 'What's the use?' I began drinking more heavily and here I am today."

The initial step in personal disorganization for some of the men was an embarrassing situation connected with some member of the parental family—a situation which often made it easier to leave home than to stay and face the people

in the home community. This initiated a period of instability which in general was coupled with dissipation. George Lane is an example of those who followed this road to dependency. He lived in a small town, learned the barber trade in his father's shop, and had prospects of becoming a stable member of that community. However, when he was about eighteen years old, pregnancy of an unmarried sister provoked a scandal. George, who was very sensistive, found living in this small town unbearable and moved to Minneapolis and then to Chicago. He was unable to make adequate adjustments to life in an urban environment, engaged in excessive dissipation, eventually moved to West Madison, and from there he moved into the shelters.

Many of the articulate single men in the shelters insist that a large share of the deterioration of unmarried dependent men is traceable to sexual maladjustments which warped their minds and social goals. For a variety of reasons they failed to get married. This resulted in either too much sex or too little. "The thing that made me what I am today is chasing women. I was always chasing women. Today I'm through chasing them. If I had only stopped years ago, I would not be what I am now. But I dreamed of them and talked about them and was with them every chance I got." Without family life and satisfying female companionship, single men had no incentive to labor, to save, to live a normal life; instead they became nomadic and self-sufficient. Sexual dissipation not only took their money but led to instability and marginal dependency.

Alcoholism. Alcoholism accounts directly or indirectly for the presence of a large number of men in the shelters.

A considerable number of shelter men explain their present dependency entirely in terms of alcoholism, with such statements as: "If I had let drink alone I would have been all right," "Booze was my greatest enemy," and "If I had quit drinking and saved my money I wouldn't be here now." A man who operated a commissary camp stated, "I've been dealing with these men for the last 30 years or more. Many of them would work a couple of days and then blow it all on drink. There are quite a few of those men and as soon as the shelters opened they all flocked in."

Ordinarily the relation of alcohol to dependency is not quite as simple as described by such men, as is shown by the number of heavy drinkers who maintain workable relationships with jobs and families. Alcoholism is generally both cause and effect in a process of many interacting factors. Excessive drinking places extraordinary strains on economic and domestic relationships and they snap unless they are extraordinarily resilient. In turn, the loss of a job or a break in marital relationships may result in the development of alcoholism. A weakening of marital affection may lead to tensions which are relieved through drinking; as the tensions increase the drinking increases until the man is unable to hold his job; the loss of the job undermines still more his relations with his family, and this results in still more drinking.

The life histories of men in the shelters reveal several ways in which excessive drinking was associated with dependency or homelessness: some were dismissed from one job after another because they were drunk on the job; some were dismissed because of inefficiency after their sprees or

because of deterioration which resulted from steady drinking; some held their jobs but spent all their surplus funds in carousing; some were ostracized by families and other groups because of drunkenness.

One of the early consequences of excessive drinking was that the men deteriorated to casual work. Due to their progressive alcoholism their appearance deteriorated, their social ties were weakened, and their periods of sobriety decreased in length. Because they were unable to continue steady and responsible work, they were forced into casual labor. This required that they live more cheaply. For this reason, as well as for the purpose of escaping from critical friends, they left the neighborhood in which they had earlier lived a stable life and moved to Hobohemia, where they could find anonymity and moral freedom, cheap food, and cheap liquor. From the cage hotel to the shelter house was a short step in the more extended process of demoralization.

Physical injuries and illnesses. Many shelter men are below par physically. Physical handicaps, by reducing their ability to compete for jobs, were at least in part, the reason for their descent toward dependency and their presence in the shelters. These physical handicaps include injuries from industrial accidents in earlier years, gradual physical impairment, and a period of sickness during the depression which caused a man to lose his job and deplete his savings.

The case of John Thorpe is typical of those men who years ago suffered physical injuries which made it next to impossible for them to compete in the industrial world. When about thirty years of age and working as a machinist he lost his leg. He secured $2,000 as compensation but, "Within two

years I had no leg and no $2,000. You can't live long on $2,000 if you're not working, maybe a year or two. Then I had to go to Oak Forest. I stayed in the poor house for a year, but that was terrible, all sorts of people and I felt like I was in prison. I left there and went on the bum. I have been bumming since, with the exception of a short period during the war when I got a job in a bridge tower. I could do the work and I liked it, but at the conclusion of the war these jobs were given back to the old employees and I was out. During the depression it has become increasingly difficult to make a living through bumming and I have had to go to the shelter a few times."

Failure in economic competition due to gradual physical impairment may have been due to some developing handicap such as arthritis, or simply advancing old age. "I arrived in the United States at twelve years of age. When I was eighteen I began to work in various boiler shops and iron works. But due to the changing temperature of the shops I developed arthritis. As I became older the arthritis became worse. Finally in 1930 I was unable to continue with my work. After that I lived out in a shack for two years and did my own cooking, but all the time the arthritis was getting worse. I went to the doctors but all they did was to give me some pills and tell me I had to have a change of diet. I couldn't change the diet and as far as I could see, the pills didn't do me any good. When I heard I could come to the shelters I said that here was my chance. I could get medical help and be a lot better off here."

The cycle of events for those suffering from a physical injury or handicap involved a loss of faith in their own

appearance and in their value to the industrial world. The handicapped do not locate the source of their difficulty in a society which fails to make provision for physically incapacitated persons to maintain themselves economically, but they locate the difficulty in themselves. They project their entire difficulty upon their inability to compete with other men in the economic field.

Illnesses played a rôle in forcing unattached men into the shelters, for the cost of medical care is too great a burden to carry through a protracted period of sickness. Moreover, in a good many cases men got initial treatment at the Cook County Hospital; from there they were sent to the shelter infirmary for convalescence; and when they left the infirmary they found no alternative to relief in a shelter. This process is described by James Keats as follows: "In March I broke my leg. They took me to the County Hospital and I stayed there a few weeks. Then they took me down to 116 Green [the shelter hospital] to get well. From there they sent me over here to 222 Morgan. Before I was sent to Green Street I had never heard of the shelters. They simply didn't have the room out at the Cook County Hospital and I was brought to Green Street. Believe me I didn't like it." A short stay in the shelter infirmary may suffice to put those who are near the margin of unemployability definitely within the dependent group. Even those who recuperate to a healthy working condition find it hard to get relocated occupationally, and may find it easier to adjust to dependence on shelter relief.

Cultural conflict. The shelter population is composed principally of men who were reared in rural communities.

These men became dissatisfied with the economic opportunities at home, heard of the prosperity in the cities of America, and decided to improve their condition by migrating to the new location. In most cases their purpose was to acquire wealth and then return home. The great majority did not acquire wealth, did not return home, and failed to make a satisfactory adjustment in the new environment.

Frustration in their economic ambitions was one of the first aspects of the cultural conflict experienced by these men of rural background. While in the beginning they centered all their interests in their jobs, with work as the dominant factor making for stability, they became disillusioned and demoralized when they found they were not approaching their economic goal. They found that their opportunities for employment were very restricted, that it was very difficult to make a living, not to mention making a fortune, and that they were subjected to a great deal of exploitation. While some were able to save four or five hundred dollars, most of them lived a hand-to-mouth existence. Even those who were able to save became discouraged when, during a period of unemployment, they had to use up their accumulated savings. One of the immigrant group, an Italian by the name of Monachesi, expressed this attitude of discouragement when he said, "I came to Tuscola, Illinois. I work hard. Drive 500, 600 spikes in the ground all day. Sometime'a work fast, sometime'a work slow, but I be able to save'a money and I save'a 'bout $500. But no work all year around 1923; have to stay home and eat up all my money. So what's the use to work?" Another man expressed this same dis-

couragement by saying, "I come here to get job—to make money. Now I have no job and no money. I haven't got nutting for myself." The one dominant control making for responsibility and stability broke down when the men became disappointed and disillusioned as to their chances of becoming economically prosperous.

Another aspect of the cultural conflict was the breaking of contacts with relatives in their home communities or with relatives and nationality groups in the new location. For a time after leaving home they carried on a regular correspondence, but with the passing of years communication became less frequent until contacts were almost completely severed. Though a large proportion of the immigrants lived with relatives when they first arrived, they became detached for one reason or another. A Polish man gives three reasons why he isolated himself from his relatives in America—their contempt because of his poverty, their financial demands upon him, and their questions about his private affairs: "You know how it is with Polish people, how they will hate a poor bum who doesn't make much money. My brother's wife expected me to buy her things she was unable to afford. I lived with them but I could see no reason why I should buy things for my brother's wife. Am I responsible for things that my brother's wife doesn't have? No, I am not. I live for myself and not for all the Polacks in the United States. Then, too, I am not married and because of this they questioned my affairs. That was too much. I decided it was time for me to leave my own people." While this statement is probably a rationalization it shows that cultural conflict arose in a situation where an immigrant had become indi-

vidualized and yet was expected to fit into the old-world patterns of behavior.

A third phase of the cultural conflict was the men's difficulty in adjusting to the complex culture of the city. Coming from a slow-moving rural environment, entrenched in traditions and enmeshed in familial, communal, and religious groups, they lost these restricting influences in the anonymity and freedom of the city. The following shows the confusion an immigrant felt in an urban environment: "Too much run in my head when I come here; too much people; too fast a life. I never be in a big city before. Here everything seemed upside down."

Detachment. As shown in the preceding discussion, most shelter men went through a gradual process of detachment which usually began early in life and continued to the time of shelter entrance. Detachment from families usually developed in one of the following ways: death of parents, leaving home for purposes of work, conflict in the home, departure because of the scandalous behavior of some member of the family, or withdrawal in order to reduce the economic burden on the family.

In those cases where the parents died when the men were still young, the men had little or no family connection, for they were cared for either in institutions or by relatives who regarded them as unwelcome burdens. In the cases where the men left home for purposes of work, there was in general a weakening of family ties. A man may have migrated from the old country to the new world, or from southern states to the north, or from country to city, and, while the separation was for the necessary and respectable purpose of work,

spatial separation led to infrequent contacts and to the shifting of interests away from the original family group.

Leaving home because of conflict with other members of the family may have been due to the unwillingness of a man to subordinate himself to the authority of the home, to sexual difficulties with his wife, or very frequently to drunkenness, gambling, sexual infidelity, or other questionable behavior on the part of the subject. In a few cases a man withdrew in order to avoid being ridiculed by the neighbors because of the behavior of some member of his family. Where separation was for the purpose of reducing the economic burden on the family, the initiative in some cases was taken by the men; in other cases the family either requested a member to withdraw or actually drove him out because he was not contributing his share to the support of the family. Detachment from families and relatives was particularly significant, for it resulted in the loss not only of the stabilizing control by the families but also of the opportunities for aid in times of emergency.

Other attachments did not compensate for detachment from relatives and friends. Detachment from intimate personal relationships generally went along with the different cycles of experiences presented above: with the economic activities which followed the pattern of marginal dependency; with an extended period of deterioration from a relatively high status to the status of the casual or semi-casual worker; with death of wife, divorce, separation, or simply remaining unmarried; with excessive drinking or alcoholism; with physical injuries and illnesses which resulted in an extended period of incapacitation and a dislocation from

social and economic contacts; and with cultural conflict. In these cases detachment was the result of social situations in which the men were placed and also of the men's personal behavior. In none of these cases were attachments made to other groups.

The long-term cycles of experience made for a gradual decline along the road leading to dependency in a shelter. In some cases the experiences immediately preceding shelter entrance were an integral part of the longer process and therefore were included in the description of the long-term cycles.

Short-Term Roads to Dependency

In the discussion of the short-term roads to dependency the emphasis will be on those series of experiences which were particularly characteristic of the depression period. These experiences were not the same for Hobohemians and non-Hobohemians. The route to the shelters taken by the Hobohemians was short and uneventful. There was no radical difference between living in a commercial flophouse and a government shelter. The only thing necessary was that the Hobohemians learn of the opportunity to secure free board and lodging in a shelter, and this news quickly spread through Hobohemia.

Non-Hobohemians, on the other hand, generally experienced a crisis in their descent from independence to dependence. They suffered a radical decline in income, soon exhausted their economic and social assets, engaged in various economies, accumulated debts, had a sense of personal failure, got used to the idea of relief, and quite fre-

quently experienced a severe personality crisis when faced with the necessity of going on relief. These events in the precipitous decline of non-Hobohemians to shelter dependence are described in the following discussion.

Radical decline of income. A radical reduction of income was the first step in the series of experiences which immediately preceded shelter entrance. While prior to the depression most of the men had become dislocated occupationally and had experienced a gradual decline in earning capacity, they had been able to secure sufficient employment to maintain an independent status. But with the beginning of the depression they experienced increased difficulty in securing any kind of employment and consequently suffered a sudden and drastic reduction of income.

Many white collar workers and skilled tradesmen who had lost their positions as a result of economic curtailments were reluctant to accept work in which they would suffer a decrease of wage or status. However, as the months went by and they didn't get the kind of a job which they desired, they were compelled either to take inferior positions, go in debt, become dependent on relatives or friends, or chose outright dependency as a preferable alternative.

A radical decline of income and the inability to find employment shattered the hopes which some of the men had of regaining their former economic status. As a result the structure of their social relationships rapidly collapsed. Those who had hopes of regaining their former economic status went through a rather typical series of experiences. They spent a few months trying to get back into an occupation with which they were familiar. When these efforts

ended in failure, they came to the conclusion that for the present they would have to be content with making expenses. When finally they were forced to acknowledge that they could not make even their minimum expenses they were ready for dependency. "I went from door to door trying to sell hosiery. But I finally couldn't make it. In the winter of 1933 I couldn't even make my room rent and money for food. Then I worked in restaurants. I pawned my trunk to pay for my rent. I sold my pawn ticket. The last straw was when I was bawled out by a girl on Clark street. She called me a dirty bum. That settled it. If I was to be a bum, I'd be one. So I gave up the struggle and applied for relief."

Exhaustion of assets. A second step in the depression road to dependency was the exhaustion of financial and social assets. Most of the men had but limited savings and consequently an extended period of unemployment meant the rapid exhaustion of such savings. The ways in which financial resources were rapidly drained included buying from employment agencies jobs which turned out badly; spending money on clothes in the attempt to maintain a presentable appearance; giving money to needy relatives; in a few cases going on a debauch to forget one's problems; and, of course, spending money for food, lodging, and other daily necessities.

After a man had used up most of his money, he felt the necessity of selling or pawning his extra suits of clothes, watch, and suitcase. In many cases these material possessions were of critical importance as class symbols and their loss resulted in a feeling of degradation.

A few men had their assets liquidated as the result of the general depreciation of values during the depression. Prior to the depression they had been aggressive in their efforts to achieve success in terms of money. They had accumulated obligations such as buying stocks on margin, speculating in real estate, or buying homes or small apartment buildings on the installment plan. The radical depreciation of values following 1929 wiped out their equities. Others lost their savings in bank failures. In a sense, general economic conditions and trends of the depression gave these men their initial push toward dependency.

Such social assets as the men possessed were likewise rapidly exhausted. Most of the personal and social relationships of this group were of so tenuous a character that they were easily shattered. Borrowing a few dollars from this friend and a few dollars from that friend, going home to dinner or having lunch with a former work companion, living on in a home or lodging house after one was unable to pay the rent, and establishing personal obligations which could not be repaid put a considerable strain on a man's social relationships. Some married men left their families rather than continue in a situation of friction and irritation. During these months spending a dollar or pawning a coat or sponging a meal off a friend brought a man just that much nearer to the shelter.

Economics. A third stage in the road to dependency consisted of various economies. The men did not secure new clothes which were needed. This caused a deterioration in appearance which not only interfered with their success in hunting work but also affected their attitudes. They econo-

mized in food by reducing the total amount consumed and also by dispensing with a balanced diet.

They economized on rent, not by moving to Hobohemia but by finding cheaper lodgings in the community in which they had been living.[1] Many of them did not make further reductions in rent until their savings were practically exhausted, at which time they often moved directly to the shelters. Some men, after leaving their home communities, slept in the parks for a few nights before entering the shelters. Some economized on both food and rent by batching with friends, generally in a basement apartment. A few remained with their former landladies, who gave them lodging and food in return for services. And some economized on food and rent by moving in with relatives or friends. However, the friends and relatives were often in as great economic distress as were the men themselves and could not give this assistance for an extended period.

The men economized not only on such things as those described, but also on many minor articles. They may have gone without tobacco or at least reduced their smoking. They may have cut out recreational activities and made stringent economies on incidental expenses. Thus many of the men made a real struggle through these and other economies to meet their expenses on the basis of a radical decline of income.

Accumulation of debts. The immediate preliminary to shelter entrance for many men was the accumulation of debts until no further credit was available. Loans from friends, unpaid balances on clothing, meals on credit, and unpaid

[1] See Chapter II.

hotel bills finally reached the point where further extension was impossible. Then most of the men saw relief as the only available solution of their food and rent problem.

A sense of personal failure. Another step in the short-term road to dependency was a developing sense of personal failure. During the first few weeks or months of unemployment, many of the men were supported by the conventional belief that those who are capable and who are industrious in seeking work will eventually be able to find it. When continued search proved unavailing, when financial and social assets had been liquidated, and when no more credit could be secured, there ensued a sharp sense of personal failure, a feeling of defeat, and a sense of hopelessness. They saw the impossibility of securing employment, either because of age, deteriorated appearance, or inability to buy a job. At first a man located the cause of his failure in himself, saying, "If I hadn't been such a damn fool in the past, I would have had a job at the present time, or at least I would have had some money saved up." Eventually he might locate the cause of his failure in conditions outside of himself, such as unemployment, the depression, or the economic system. In general, however, this projection of his failure on outside conditions was made only after a long period of unemployment.

Introduction to the idea of relief. Most of the men became acquainted with the idea of relief before they actually made application for it. The pressure of circumstances made them search for alternative ways of solving their problem and at this point they weighed the possibility of getting public relief. In one way or another they knew that many

people were solving their problem of destitution by accepting public relief. A man might say to himself, "Many good people are on relief. If I actually had to, I suppose I could go on relief, too."

The men became acquainted with the idea of shelter relief by reading about the shelters in the newspapers, or by being referred to the shelters by family relief agencies where they had applied for relief. Also an individual might direct them to the shelter, as in the following cases: "The priest told me about the shelter. He said, 'Go down there and they will take care of you.'" "My brother-in-law told me about it. He was working for the city and had charge of a group of men." "I was talking to a fellow with whom I had gotten acquainted in a restaurant. He told me about the shelter. Later I found that this man was one of the shelter staff workers." After they became aware that shelters were available, they debated with themselves the question of applying for admission, and they entered the shelters in their imagination before they entered them in reality.

Personal crisis. A personal crisis of considerable intensity was experienced by many men during the days immediately prior to shelter entrance. For some the critical element was the acceptance of dependency for the first time. For others it was the view that going on relief was an objective indication of personal defeat. These men frequently wandered about on the streets and in the parks for several days before they acknowledged defeat by applying to the shelters. For some of this group it was necessary to be mentally and physically broken prior to their application for relief. When they finally faced the reality of complete desti-

tution they felt that they had suffered a social death. They faced identification with the lowest social strata and felt that they would be disqualified from participation in all the social and economic world except that of the flophouse area. They may have contemplated the alternative of suicide and have chosen a shelter as the lesser of two evils.

In some cases an individual who was almost completely absorbed in his internal conflicts went into a trance-like state and while entering the shelter was not completely aware of the external world. He "came to" after he had gone through the intake department and had been assigned to a shelter. The apathy and numbness which resulted from mental conflict acted like an anæsthetic. When he went under this anæsthetic he was in the world of relatively free, self-respecting, self-sustaining individuals; when he came to he was a shelter dependent. After one or two frustrated attempts to reinstate himself in the external world he gave up the struggle and gradually became habituated to shelter life.

CHAPTER V

ACTIVITIES OF SHELTER MEN

Getting the Morning Paper

Early each morning many shelter men walk to the elevated stations on Wells Street or to the stations of other trains to get their morning newspapers. They get in line at the station exits and wait their turn to get papers from those passengers who have saved them for the unemployed men at the train exits. Men line up as early as 5:30 A.M., and only a few are in line after 9:30 A.M. If it is raining the line may be a little shorter, but most of those who have acquired the habit go for their papers rain or shine.

On September 5, 1934, during the few moments required for the count, it was found that 125 men were in line at twenty elevated exits on Wells Street between Jackson Boulevard and Lake Street. In the hour between 7:15 and 8:15 A.M., 225 papers were handed out to the men at two of the exits. It is conservative to estimate that over 4,000 newspapers were given away on Wells Street that morning.

Some of the men collect papers in this manner, take them back to the shelters, and sell them for a penny each. It was observed that several of the men would get a paper and then go back to the end of the line and go through the routine six or eight times. One man was getting papers and putting them into a nearby garbage container. He had already collected ten papers and was in line for another. However, most of the men get only one paper for their personal use.

The newspaper is useful to the men in several ways. For those who collect several papers it is a method of making a few cents. Many of the men get the papers for information about current events, some to follow the ball games, others to follow the horse races, and a few to look at the want ads. The newspaper helps the men keep in touch with the external world of which they were once a part. It helps them kill an hour or two in an enjoyable manner and it serves the function of stimulating their interests.

It has become a custom for many "L" and other train riders to save their papers for the men. The men are orderly and moreover they do not beg. "If a man should bum the people, the other men would raise hell, feeling that bumming would queer the works and make the police clamp down on the paper line more than they now do." The men consider that they have a right to get newspapers by this method and resent police interference with the paper line for they feel that getting the morning paper in this manner is a custom which the police should respect.

Walking

Many men spend much time in walking. "Walk, walk, walk, all the time. That's all I do. That's how I spend most of my day." Most of the walking is aimless wandering about in the vicinity of the shelters or up and down West Madison Street.

Each morning some of the men, even though they have no money, journey around the city by using discarded transfers. However, most of them feel that they have no need of speedy transportation for they are not going anywhere, that

walking is good exercise, and that it is a good way to kill time. Many of these men have been accustomed to a life of activity and now that they are unemployed and have nothing to do they get rid of the resulting restlessness by doing a great deal of walking.

Hangouts

The men are compelled to leave the shelters at nine in the morning, and they move with deliberate speed to various hangouts, such as hotel lobbies, depots, union halls, courts, certain West Madison Street corners, handbooks, taverns, parks, and jungles. A few men go to the better-class hotels where they lived prior to shelter entrance. Here they meet former friends, enter into conversation with them, and play cards or checkers in the lobby. Most of the men go to West Madison hotels where they obtain a vicarious pleasure from the stories which the men tell of their past exploits. When the voice of the bouncer is heard announcing, "The lobby is for guests only, all others must leave," the more timid of the chair-sitters may arise and go to the front of the hotel; but not so the old habitués. They sit as peacefully as the paying guests. The bouncer is forced to ask all those who occupy chairs for their tickets. By the time he reaches the old-timers another half hour has been gained, which is of considerable importance if it is winter and the temperature is zero.

West Madison Street corners are favorite hangouts for many of the men. Here they are real people and are accepted without question. West Madison is a haven of refuge to them, since they are without status elsewhere. Moreover,

this street is the center of many interesting activities. Here if one wants to bet on the horses he can hunt up a racing form, pick the winners for the day, and spend time in one of the numerous handbooks along the street. He can learn of the odd jobs of which there are hundreds in Chicago, even in this period of depression. On this street men are recruited for the gandy or railroad jobs. Then, too, on West Madison are to be found men that know the latest rackets, the easy methods of fleecing the public, and improvements in begging. West Madison is a hangout for shelter men because it is the focus of these and other interesting activities.

In a depot a man can find a place to sit and read his paper. In the union halls he may meet old acquaintances. In the courts he can watch the trial proceedings. Possibly the day's cases will constitute a show. The men particularly relish personal affairs of the divorce trial type, go early to get a seat, and sit throughout the session.

An idea of the type of tavern which the men patronize is secured from the description of a slugging that occurred on North Clark Street. "This tavern is the lowest dive on Clark Street. It is known as 'The Bucket of Blood.' Here, almost any night, you can see bloody fights; and it was here that a shelter man was killed two weeks ago. He was drunk, and when the entertainer passed the collection plate around, he struck it out of her hand, and the money scattered on the floor. He was slugged and dragged into the alley and left there. Four days later he died."

In the summer nearly all shelter men spend much time in the parks. Unmolested, they enjoy the fresh air and scenery which is a welcome contrast with the shelter environment.

While a man may select the park nearest to his shelter, the most popular and general loafing place of the down-and-outers is Grant Park which is opposite the exclusive Michigan Avenue shops and offices. Lincoln, Jefferson, Union, and Washington are other popular parks. Some go to the parks to sleep or to read the newspapers, others to watch baseball and other games, and still others find companions with whom they engage in conversation and arguments.

The radical intellectual group congregate especially in Bughouse Square on the Near North Side. In winter these men attend the different forums in Hobohemia. Some shelter men are active members of communistic and other radical groups. They assiduously attend the meetings of these groups and attempt to convert other men to their point of view. A few shelter men are affiliated with such fascist groups as the American Order of Silver Shirts and Friends of New Germany. However there is very little active support of radical movements among shelter men. Many of them detest, avoid, and even despise communism. They brand it a foreign importation and a breach of Americanism. "I do not want none of that there European stuff, least of all communism or fascism. Even the fascism and communism that's talked in this shelter is too much for me. What I want is a job so that I can get out of this here place."

Some shelter men go to the jungles, for here they find companionship, a bit of mulligan, and the all important bottle. While most of those who go to the jungles return to the shelters after a few hours, some may stay several days.

It is impossible to determine how much time the men spend in these hangouts. However, it is safe to say that most

of the men spend more than half their waking hours in one or more of the places described.

Snipe-Shooting

It is customary for shelter men to pick up cigarette and cigar butts from the street. This practice is called "snipe-shooting," "netting curbstone bouquets," or "sneaking O.P.B.'s" (Other People's Butts). The snipe-shooters go out early in the morning, for they know that "the early bird is the one who gets the most snipes in the shortest time." Men with eyes glued to the ground go along the street and stoop down every once in a while to pick up a cigarette or cigar stub.

This practice supplies them with tobacco, generally of a better grade than they could afford to buy. It enables them to save their money for other purposes. Moreover, a few men accumulate tobacco through snipe-shooting, take off the original papers, put it in small bags or roll it into cigarettes, and then offer it for sale to the other men.

Snipe-shooters come to know the places in which cigarette stubs will be found in the greatest quantity. They know that the Loop, while it is the best place from the point of view of quantity, is dangerous because of the police. "I wouldn't advise you to hunt snipes in the Loop, for while the butts are as long as this (measuring with his hands the length of a lead pencil), you are almost sure to get picked up by the police." Occasionally a man has a friend who is janitor in some hall and goes around periodically to get the sweepings. As a rule, however, the men confine their snipe-shooting to the streets just outside of the Loop district.

Many of the men, especially when they first enter the shelters, have inhibitions against this practice. Pride is probably the most restraining factor. A man who has been able to go into a cigar store and buy a package of cigarettes, suffers a blow to his pride if he has to pick up cigarette stubs people have thrown away. Another inhibition is a feeling of embarrassment in having others see him do it. "I have stood on the corners wanting the butts I saw in the gutter, yet if anyone was around I was ashamed to pick them up." The feeling that it is unsanitary to smoke tobacco which to some extent has been in contact with other people's mouths is a third barrier which a man must overcome before he can enjoy the tobacco secured in this way. On the problem of sanitation the men have developed an adequate rationalization: "Have you ever seen a man who got sick from snipes? Tobacco kills germs and you can't get a disease from snipes."

These barriers may be sufficient to prevent a man from adopting this practice. However, after a man has been in the shelters for a few weeks and finds that many of the men are supplying their need for tobacco by this method and finds himself hungry for tobacco, he tends to follow the group pattern. Once he becomes accustomed to picking up cigarette butts, he is likely to make it a regular part of his daily activities, although he may do it at times and places where few people will see him.

Work Activities

The extent to which the men hunt work or engage in work varies with the length of time they have been in the shelters, with prior occupational status, and with certain other factors.

The work activities of the men are of five general types. First, quite a large number are hunting for full-time employment. These men usually leave the shelters early in the morning and go to factories where they previously worked, or to a place where it is rumored that a company is taking on additional employees. They wait patiently outside the factory buildings, hoping against hope to be lucky when selection is made. Very few men have their hopes fulfilled.

All shelter men, except the disabled, chronically ill, and staff workers, are required to work about five hours every two weeks, for which they receive twenty-five cents and a ticket entitling them to food and lodging in the shelters.[1] It is known as "two-bit work" and consists of doing chores around the shelters, cleaning up vacant lots, and in winter shoveling snow off the streets and sidewalks. While the men are generally antagonistic toward this work, feeling that it is meaningless and unnecessary, some are anxious to work not only their own tickets but also other men's tickets. If a man wants to, he can pick up several extra quarters a month in this way.

Shelter men who work on the staff include clerks, librarians, mechanics, electricians, plumbers, painters, tailors, shoemakers, barbers, cooks, waiters, janitors, and watchmen. These men are regularly employed and receive salaries ranging from $1 to $5 a week. In addition, staff workers receive special privileges and accommodations which mean about as much to them as the money which they receive.

A few of the men spend two or three days a week in peddling bills. These men go to the yard of the Big Four

[1] The shelter administration discontinued this work in the summer of 1935.

Advertising Carriers, where all push and shove to reach the man who is giving out the numbers. The men's reaction to bill peddling is as follows, "I work all day long for that $2.50. Damn the whole publishing business. By the end of the day I'm so damn tired walking up and down stairs that I vow I'll never do it again, but after all, $2.50 to me is a lot of money."

Others engage in odd jobs. Some go to the market on Randolph Street where they may get a job sorting potatoes or other vegetables; for this they receive 75 cents a day. Other men go to restaurants where they may get a few hours' work washing dishes. Others go to the freight houses where there is a chance of securing a few hours' work at 40 cents an hour. This work at the freight houses is more or less a closed proposition to the stranger because, "The men who have previously worked at the freight houses have paid part of their wages to the bosses in anticipation of future favors." Many regularly go down to the docks, hoping to get a few hours' work unloading a boat. Many others have learned the right street corners on which to stand to get jobs helping truck drivers. The truck drivers have learned that on these corners they can find men who will work for very little. Another group, the parking station gang, earn a few dimes by watching cars. Their approach is, "Say, Mister, you ought to have someone watch your car; you never can tell what's gonna happen in this neighborhood. I'll polish it while it's parked if you want me to." Some of the men go from house to house in residential neighborhoods or to stores asking for odd jobs, such as washing windows, cleaning rugs, repairing radios, and the like.

Alley picking is a fifth work activity. Men may be seen going out in the morning with sacks under their arms and, later in the day, coming back with the sacks filled with junk which had been gathered in alleys and vacant lots. "I go alley picking every morning for things which I may be able to sell to the junk dealers. Sometimes I make a quarter or so by collecting old rags and papers and picking up a few other things." This picking up of other things usually is in the nature of carrying away anything which is not locked up or nailed down. A good alley picker is able to make a dollar or more a day.

Visiting Relatives and Friends

Most of the men avoid former friends and relatives. They are ashamed because they are on relief, and they are afraid that they may be embarrassed because they do not have money or decent clothes or because their clothes carry the shelter smell. A few do visit relatives and friends. They make these visits for various reasons. Some go to get money or a meal. Others have left their best clothes at the homes of friends and on Sundays, holidays, or when applying for a good job they go out and put on a change of clothing. Some go to homes of relatives and friends to enjoy their friendliness and hospitality. It should be remembered that some of the men entered the shelters in order to relieve the economic burden on the family of a relative or friend with whom they had been living. In such circumstances a man is welcomed back. "I like to visit my brother. I like the children. When they see me coming they stop playing and say, 'Uncle Louie's here.' Then we go upstairs and we have a lot of fun." Such

friends and relatives frequently take care of a man's laundry; thus a man has another reason for going back home. Still others go back to the old neighborhood simply because they feel the pull of the home community. "I have to go back to the old cabbage patch once in a while because it's home to me."

Reading and Writing

Reading may be engaged in as a pastime, for entertainment, or as a serious pursuit. The reading materials consist of newspapers, magazines, novels, and books of a more or less technical nature. While most of the men prefer the Chicago *Daily News,* an evening paper, they say they read the *Tribune* because it can be secured free in the morning under the Elevated. The magazines are almost entirely of the detective, mystery, western, and general adventure type.

A few scholars can be found in the shelters. One studied oriental languages because he felt that trade relations with Japan are going to become increasingly important and that, if he has a knowledge of oriental languages, he stands a better chance of getting a job. Another was seen day after day reading books on traffic management. Still another reads all the books on economics he can get. However, the scholars are going against the shelter current and one who keeps up an interest in serious study for any considerable period of time is an exception.

Most of the shelters maintain a small library from which a magazine, a book of fiction, or a newspaper can be secured. Many of the men patronize the city libraries. However, not all of those who go to the city libraries go for the purpose of

reading. Some use the library as a place in which to sleep, especially if they were unable to sleep in the shelter the previous night.

Sometimes a man carries a magazine around with him. This is regarded as a sign that he has given up the search for work and is ready for the winter. "If I put a magazine in my pocket, I wouldn't work for Holy Moses until I finished the story that I might have started. One cannot read and still hustle for coffee an'. It's one or the other, you can't do both." There are some who will read in the toilets of the shelters long after the lights have been turned out in the library and dormitory.

Reading provides an escape from the sordid and depressing situation of the shelters into the world of imagination. A story enables a man to identify himself with the successful hero of the tale, and serious study enables him to live in the future possibility of a higher and better status.

A few engage in writing letters. Occasionally a man takes it upon himself to better his own condition or the condition of the shelter group by writing to the Relief Commission, editors of the daily papers, or even to the president of the United States.

Some try their hand at writing novels, scenarios, and poems for commercial purposes.[2] Although there is no knowledge that any of their offerings have been accepted for publication, they have secured emotional release and enjoyment in this manner. A few have written autobiographies under the general title, *My Life in the Flophouse.* Like the scholars, this group of writers is very small in number.

[2] See poem, p. 158.

"Special Activities"

"Special activities" in the form of recreation, handicraft, and educational classes are sponsored by the shelter administration. The recreational activities attract the interest of a considerable proportion of the men. The games include dominoes, checkers, cards, shuffle board, and ping pong. Of these, checkers and cards are the most popular. Some of the men play cards the entire day, with the exception of the few hours in the morning when they are forced to stay out of the shelter buildings; they play in the evenings until the lights go out. Athletic contests, such as baseball, volley ball, and horse shoes, are enjoyed by the men either as participants or as spectators. Shelter programs may take the form of a show put on by a shelter group, a movie, stereopticon slides, a debate, or group singing. Whenever there is a movie or a vaudeville show the men crowd the shelter assembly room to its full capacity.

Handicraft work, a second special activity,[3] includes the making of rugs, belts, airplanes, boats, and other small articles. Some of these articles require considerable skill, patience, and care in their making. Many of the products made in the handicraft shop are of very good quality. The men who engage in handicraft see in the making of a rug or a wood carving an interesting way in which to keep busy. Some do handicraft work for the money which they may get from their products. However, it usually takes a week or

[3] Handicraft work was discontinued in the summer of 1935 by a "business expert" who was sent to Chicago to curtail expenses. He ordered all rugs, materials for rugs, tools, and equipment for handicrafts taken to the furnace and burned. The reason given was that in his opinion this was useless and not the proper way for the government to spend money.

more to make a rug, a man gets only about a dollar for it, has to find his own buyer, frequently the articles are not sold, and consequently only a few men engage in such activities. Some of the men sneer at these activities, saying, "Just imagine trying to teach grown men to make rugs, model airplanes, and the like. Why don't they teach them to do something useful?" Others who appreciate the opportunity to keep themselves busy at interesting work explain, "We might as well be doing this while waiting for the government to do something to get us jobs. At least we are busy. I couldn't stand just sitting around like some of these fellows."

Educational classes constitute the third type of special activities. The men go to those classes which are most related to getting a job, such as typewriting, shorthand, and bookkeeping. Only a small number go to the other classes, for they fail to see the relationship between the study of English or arithmetic or civics and their own rehabilitation. "The man who is out of a job doesn't care anything about improving his intelligence. We don't need no education; we need a job. Only a job will help us. Why the hell can't they put these teachers out hunting jobs for us? It would do us a lot more good." While the above is the attitude of the majority, some men find the classes enlightening and get a good deal of enjoyment out of the chance to express themselves in the class discussion. Moreover, three or four men who have enrolled in the typing courses have secured jobs upon completing the course. In the summer of 1935 some of the teachers were given jobs as councilors. Rather than teach classes they spent their time just talking to the individual shelter men. The men responded favorably to this

change for they enjoy talking to anyone who gives them a sympathetic hearing.

The work which is carried on by the Special Activities Department of the shelters is one of the most constructive aspects of the shelter program. This is particularly true of the recreational activities, for games, athletic contests, and programs help keep up the morale of the group.

Outside Movies and Shows

The men patronize, also, the movies and burlesque shows on West Madison and South State Streets. For ten cents a man can go to a cheap movie, experience romance and tragedy, and forget that he is an inmate of a shelter. Very few men can afford to go to the better movies or burlesque shows. Occasionally, free tickets to the Haymarket Theater, one of the best burlesque shows in the city, have been distributed to the men. Some men use the shows as rest places; they see the show first, sleep for a few hours, and then return to the shelter for their meals.

Missions

Every night a group of men from the shelters may be found in the missions of Hobohemia. The following conversation between a newcomer to the shelters and an old-timer illustrates the attitude of the men toward the missions: "Come on; let's hit the missions tonight." "What do you do?" "Oh, sing and pray and watch the boys get saved and when it's over we get coffee an'. Of course eleven out of every ten of the missions are there to make money and fleece

the public. But we might as well go over and enjoy the show. There may be some women there."

While going to the missions for free food is an old tradition of the migratory worker and the home guard casual, some men have adopted the practice since shelter entrance. Many of the men indicate quite frankly that free food is the reason for going to the missions. "Yes, we get the Lord and a bowl of soup. I'd rather have the bowl of soup than the Lord. I'll have the Lord by and by."

A large number go to the missions to see the show. Many of the activities connected with the services tend to take on a dramatic character. There are one or more tense moments in almost every mission meeting. "John was converted again last night. I was there at the mission. John went up to the altar in front, knelt down, and confessed his sins. The female church workers began to weep rather hysterically and you could actually feel the tenseness in the air, for this was the climax of the evening. Some of the men get a bigger kick out of these conversions than they do by going to a show. In fact, many of them have said that when they have no money for burlesque shows, they use the missions as a substitute."

Some of the men go to the missions for sexual purposes. This was interpreted by one of the men as follows: "From the time I have spent in the missions and from talks I have had with men who frequent them I am convinced that the men very definitely go to the missions to get a certain kind of sex satisfaction. Anyone who spends a few nights in the missions will come to see the truth of the statement. The female members of the audience make very obvious attempts to flirt with the better dressed men." Another man expressed

the idea that the men go to the missions for sex purposes but their desires do not get expression in overt behavior: "They and I go to the missions to see, and to be seen, to admire and hope for things the same way that a kid does about Christmas time when he is looking at the pretty toys in the window; things that he knows he will not be able to get, but which, if he did, would make him the happiest fellow on earth." At the same time there is some disagreement as to this motive, for some say they go to the missions to conquer sex.

More men go to the missions for the consolation and comfort which they may secure from religion than is indicated by their statements. They do not and will not admit this motive even to their more intimate acquaintances, for the traditions of Hobohemia are anti-religious and a person simply must not be known as a "mission stiff."

Criminal and Semi-Criminal Activities

A few men in the shelters engage in criminal and semi-criminal activities. In general these activities are of the petty larceny type. A general complaint of shelter men is that petty stealing is prevalent inside the shelters. The men who steal just pick up small articles which they can sell for cash. One of the research workers asked one of the men who was boasting that he had $1.25 how he got so much money. His reply was, "I took a searchlight and went down to Maxwell Street and sold it." "Where did you get the searchlight?" "Ah, that would be telling." Another man got a job peddling ice cream but, "The dicks came over to the shelter after I was through peddling and said that I ran away with the ice cream and took all the money that I had gotten from it."

Generally those who engage in petty larceny are chronic alcoholics.

In addition to those who pick up small articles, there are a few men who use a more developed technique. One man gave the following description of a trick he worked on a wholesale liquor dealer: "I was selling liquor for two or three firms and one day I was downtown and didn't even have money to get back to the shelter. So I thought I would see if I could work a stunt. I went into a company and pretended that I was mad. I told them I had been working for another company; had ordered a shipment of liquor for a couple of customers; that it had not been delivered; and that I was looking for a company that would be punctual in supplying my customers. They signed me up, gave me some samples, and that was the last they saw of me. I took the liquor over to North Clark and sold it at a tavern for $4."

A few men who have presentable clothes lounge in the waiting rooms of department stores, looking for forgotten packages from which they can get cash either by returning them for a rebate or selling them outside the store. Not many shelter men visit these places and those that do change frequently from one department store to another.

A few crimes of a more serious nature have been committed by shelter men. In the Chicago *Tribune* of March 12, 1934, the following story was carried: "In his bare feet Frank Boland, 35 years old, 6824 Kennedy Avenue, Hammond, a road supervisor of Lake County, Ind., walked into the police building at 11th and State Streets yesterday to report he had been robbed during the night in a lodging house of personal property valued at $1,400. Warming his feet at

a radiator, Boland told his story to Sergt. William Murphy. 'I came to Chicago Saturday to buy a suit,' he began. 'After I made my purchase I went out for a few drinks. When I awoke this morning I found I had been robbed. The thieves took $160 in cash, a $1,100 diamond ring, a $20 ruby ring, a $50 watch, a $60 overcoat, and a pair of shoes worth $10. I hurried out of the place, which was a cheap lodging house somewhere around State and Harrison Streets. I wore out my socks walking over here'." The ruby ring was found in the possession of a shelter man and he was arrested for the crime.

Thus we find the men engaging in various activities. During a given day one man might engage in most of these activities, while another might spend his time on a very few of them. The activities are for the most part meaningless, are merely ways by which the men kill time, and lead nowhere. They are adjusted to the economic level of the shelter group, being activities of men who, without financial resources, are trying to pass the time as enjoyably as possible. The capacity of human beings to adapt to almost any situation is illustrated by the fact that most shelter men spend the major part of their time in these petty and, in general, purposeless activities.

CHAPTER VI

FOUR VICES

Shelter men engage in certain activities which according to conventional standards would be called vices. Their four principal vices are excessive drinking, gambling, irregular sex practices, and begging. In the world of Hobohemia these activities are not particularly reprehensible. In fact, they are ways by which an individual may secure prestige and approbation. The following description of these vices, in accordance with the general plan of the book, will be from the point of view of the shelter men.

Drinking

Drinking is one of the most pervasive elements of shelter life. The men fall into four classes with reference to drinking: There is a comparatively small number of teetotalers. The majority partake of intoxicating drinks occasionally but rarely become drunk. A number go on periodic sprees and become completely drunk. Possibly 10 per cent of the men are chronic alcoholics. The chronic alcoholics are called "booze hounds" and are divided into yaki dockers or those who make every effort to secure palatable liquor, and derailers or those who drink denatured alcohol, sterno, or anything "that will give them a bang."

Cheap moonshine joints abound in the neighborhood of most of the shelters. These are generally located in basement flats of old dilapidated buildings. Their prevalence is known to the men, to the shelter administration, to the police, and

through the newspapers to many citizens. The police make raids on these places when criticisms by newspapers or other agencies become serious. For instance, in the spring of 1935 such a raid was conducted, but the rumor was that only the unprotected places suffered.

The following quotation shows the prevalence of bootleg places in the vicinity of the shelters: "There are at least thirteen joints right around this shelter. I know because I have been in several of them myself. The whole neighborhood is full of them. You can't get away from the booze." Their proximity is illustrated by a conversation that a research worker in the rôle of a client had with two bona fide clients—one sober and the other drunk. The sober client asked Murphy, "How did you get tanked up so early?" "Oh, we are early birds around here, and then, you don't have to go far for it. You haven't got a bottle on you, have you?" "No, I'm not carrying one today." The research worker chided Murphy by saying, "I bet you have the price of a bottle on you right now." "No sir! If I had a dime, I would walk across the street to that building and get myself a half pint of moon."

How is it that a group of men on charity and practically penniless can create a sufficient demand so that moonshine joints cluster around the shelters? The answer is that most of the men get their liquor money through begging. This is particularly true of the heavy periodic drinkers and the chronic alcoholics. The statement has been made, "Nine times out of ten a shelter man who is a heavy drinker will get his booze money through panhandling." Other methods of earning the price of a bottle include peddling notions, odd

jobs, selling newspapers, stealing, and selling personal clothing and meal tickets. To get a dime for booze an alcoholic will gather waste paper, rags, bottles, and other junk, or will steal toilet paper and other small articles which have a cash value. Some get an eye-opener each morning from bootleggers and saloon-keepers who know that if a man gets started drinking in the morning he will probably keep it up all day or until he is incapacitated.

Drinks may be secured from friends or acquaintances. "Lots of people will give you booze. You can go down the street and meet someone with a bottle. You say, 'Hi John, have you got anything to drink?' Right now I've got to go out and get a taste to keep me from being sick. I'm feeling sick now. You know I never would beg in the world but if I had ten or fifteen cents it would surely fix me up. You wouldn't want to lend me ten or fifteen cents, would you? No? O.K. Well, I guess I will be going along. I'll rustle out and see if I can find a friend who has a bottle."

The chronic alcoholics make themselves conspicuous by staggering around the streets in the vicinity of the shelters, by standing in small groups in front of shelter buildings, and by panhandling everyone who passes. The activities of such men are illustrated by the following statement of a chronic drunk: "I have been drinking steadily for the last two days. I drank about two pints of moon. It didn't cost me a cent. I bummed the drinks from some friends of mine. Last Monday I sold pencils and earned sixty cents and used it all for booze. To tell you the truth, sometimes I get so hard up for booze that I wake up in the morning after being on a drunk and lick the cork of the bottle that I have under my pillow."

This man described a typical day as follows: "Woke at the Hobbie Street shelter at 5:30; had breakfast; had a nickel in my pocket and walked to Lake Street and Western Avenue and tried to buy five cents' worth of derail. The man in the paint store said he wasn't selling any that day for he had been pinched recently for doing it. Went to another paint store, and they wouldn't sell me less than fifteen cents' worth. On Western and Fulton Street I bummed a dime from a man, and bought fifteen cents' worth of denatured alcohol in the paint store on Grand Avenue. I got some water out of a hydrant on Chicago Avenue near the Polish church, and mixed my drink. My intention was just to take one good drink and sober up; but as soon as I had one drink, I forgot all about my intention and drank almost all of it. A friend came along and I gave him one small drink out of the bottle. Then I came back to the shelter house—stewed. They stopped me at the door and wasn't going to let me in. But my case worker came along and I had a break and got in for the night."

A person may meet a few of this type and may come to the conclusion that most shelter men are chronic alcoholics. Actually, chronic alcoholics constitute but a small percentage of the total shelter population.

Drinking is probably more rampant among men who have paid positions on the staff than among linesmen.[1] On payday many of the staff men go on a spree, frequently drinking with the linesmen and paying for the drinks. One of the research men, who for several months slept in the sleeping room for the staff, relates the following on staff drinking:

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[1] Linesmen are the regular shelter inmates, so called because for one reason or another they are in line most of the day.

"During some of the nights that I slept in the shelter in this room it was not uncommon for linesmen to knock on the door on the way up to bed and leave a pint of moon for the boys. The bottle was usually presented to one of the staff workers with a gesture that implied all the men in the room. Not less than twelve pint bottles came to the room as gifts one night after some of the men had a particularly profitable day peddling bills. Drinking in the staff room could not have been a secret. The watchman who might have just thrown out a line drunk might immediately have to help a staff man to bed. The janitor who removed the bottles at least four times a week must have known about it. Yet nothing was done about it until there was a particularly bad fight in the room and several teeth were left on the floor."

There are many reasons why men in the shelters drink. The primary one is that drinking in the shelters is simply a continuation on an accelerated scale of past drinking tendencies. For years most of these men were drinkers, and during the critical months prior to shelter entrance they increased the quantity of liquor which they consumed.

Excessive drinking is a part of the Hobohemian culture. There drink is regarded as *the* remedy for all of life's evils. Shelter men, living as they do in Hobohemia, tend to adopt the suggestion, "Why don't you get drunk and forget it?"

Alcohol releases a man from such inhibitions as a lack of confidence, a feeling of personal inferiority, and a feeling of failure. "When I drink I got guts. When I'm not tanked up I sit quiet and still, but when I'm drunk I can go up and bum anybody, panhandle, or bum from store to store. I can go to a woman, fight, or do anything."

Many drink because it is one of the few ways of showing friendliness. "You go among a gang of fellows and the first thing you do is to take a drink. You might find some cheapskate that drinks by himself, but most of the gang drink with others. I have to have a few friends around me when I drink. Once you get into a drinking gang it is hard to get away from them. They will say, 'Come on, how about a little drink?' You say, 'I don't feel like drinking now.' 'Oh, you're getting stuck up, are you? A little too good for us ordinary bums.' And so a person just naturally takes a drink to stay in good with the gang. Sometimes a fellow don't want to drink all the money he's got, but when he feels that he is the best guy in the bunch if he buys the most bottles he'll buy until he's broke."

The prestige which is accorded the drinker is another reason for some shelter drinking. A man who can keep good-naturedly drunk and not get into trouble with the watchman is a very popular man. While the men dislike being disturbed by chronic drunks, they respect the heavy drinker who is apparently immune to the effects of liquor. They say with approbation and a smile of tolerance, "That guy Kelly can drink more booze than any two men put together, and he's drunk practically all the time. That son-of-a-gun never drew a sober breath since he was born and washed with alcohol. The doctor probably dropped some in his mouth and he's never been dry since. But he's as quiet as a baby and hardly ever staggers. He's a small guy, but believe me he sure can carry his liquor."

The men drink more heavily now than formerly because they feel hopeless about the future. This attitude of hope-

lessness is revealed in the following conversation between a research worker and a chronic alcoholic who happened to be sober at the time of the interview. To the question, "Could a man like yourself quit drinking?" the man replied, "A person can quit drinking if he has two things: persistency and determination. The trouble is that the others will probably say, 'Come on, take one. What's the matter with you?' That's the way it is with me. I take a little nip and keep on nipping and the first thing I know I'm drunk."

The research worker raised the question of the man's age and asked him, "What are your plans for the future? You're sixty-four years old and unless you get jack-rolled, killed, or hit by an automobile you will probably live ten or fifteen years. What have you to look forward to?" The man replied, "What hope have I anyway? The way things are right now I haven't a chance to get a job. A man my age has nothing to look forward to. There isn't a factory that would put me to work for they couldn't get me insured. I have given up hopes of getting a job."

A few, particularly the white collar and older men who have small pensions, are able to buy legal liquor of fairly good quality. However, most men have been forced to use cheap and low quality liquor. Some have come to the point where they drink derail—denatured alcohol diluted with water. Even though the derailer is despised and considered the lowest of the drinkers, many either regularly or occasionally drink this type of liquor.

The drunks have several types of enemies. Watchmen prevent them from entering the shelter in an intoxicated condition or in some cases until they "pass over a little change

in the form of an entrance fee." Women "give the drinkers a good time but take the last penny away from the drunks." Jack-rollers, those who rob drunks, are the worst enemies of this group. There are three types of jack-rollers: men who come into Hobohemia for the express purpose of preying upon drunken men, tavern hoisters, and shelter men themselves. Jack-rolling is an established and common practice of Hobohemian culture.

Intimate conversations with drinkers reveal that many of them have been jack-rolled and that some of them have been jack-rollers. "Nowadays, they will jack-roll you for a nickel." "I've rolled some fellows, and then when I get drunk, I've been rolled. Got rolled pretty often, too." "I place all my extra dimes on the ponies and baseball. Quite a few times I have made fifteen or twenty dollars on a few cents. Of course it didn't do me any good for I got drunk and got jack-rolled for what I had left." The man in need of liquor will not hesitate to jack-roll a drunk and if he rationalizes it, he says, "If I didn't take the fool's money, someone else sooner or later would be bound to take it." The jack-roller is a veritable vulture who ruthlessly preys upon the drunks. If a drunk has only a few cents then he will likely receive a severe beating.

A research worker reported the following incident on the physical injuries received by an alcoholic who had been jack-rolled: "I had not seen anything of Dick for about ten days. Today he came into the office. He had been jack-rolled and he certainly was a sight. There was a big gash about three inches in length on his forehead; he had various black and blue marks on his face; he had suffered two broken ribs;

one leg from the ankle to the knee was completely black and blue and the knee of the other leg was bruised. His explanation was, 'I must have struggled against the jack-rollers, for they certainly did beat me up'."

Jack-rolling occurs frequently within the shelters. The more quiet drunks are allowed to sleep on the benches in the basement. There they may be jack-rolled by another shelter man or by an outsider who gains access to the basement by pretending to be drunk. In some cases the watchman himself is the jack-roller.

Regulation and control of drinkers is almost completely in the hands of shelter watchmen and case workers. However there is some informal control by the men themselves. Informal control is of two kinds: protection of drinkers and protection for the group against disturbance by drunks. If a non-drunk hits a drunk, this information spreads and the men show their condemnation in various ways. On the other hand, if anybody comes up to the sleeping rooms intoxicated and makes too much noise, the others are likely to get together and throw him out. "Last night a man next to me got up in his nightgown and started to sing and the men kicked him out because he was keeping everybody awake. What he needed was somebody to mother him but I couldn't do it, for I was somewhat drunk myself."

In some shelters men who are obviously intoxicated are not permitted to enter the building. In others they are permitted to enter but are assigned to the basement. If the number of intoxicated men is very large, the police may be called to take all of them to the station. A man who frequently becomes drunk is transferred to the Hobbie Street

shelter, which is known as "The Hell-Hole of the Drunks." "I got transferred from 222 Morgan because I was drunk. This Hobbie is bad but they don't squawk about a guy drinking. At 222 those guys wouldn't let you take one. If they even smelled liquor on your breath, they would kick you out. And if you had any liquor on you, they'd take it away and drink it themselves. I hate those staff guys. At least around here they're mostly all drunks, and so they let you drink if you want to."

Gambling

The gambling habit has been accentuated since shelter entrance. The men are necessarily limited to small stakes, but they express as much enthusiasm and use as much energy in their gambling as do the patrons of expensive gambling houses. The most common forms of gambling are card playing and betting on the races.

The principal gambling games are black jack, stud poker, and six-card rummy. Pinochle is generally played as a pastime. The atmosphere around a game which is played just as a pastime is much different from that around a game where some article or cash is at stake. In the latter case there is very little talking, a great deal of cursing, and each player is watching the others closely to detect possible cheating. The men use various substitutes for money: cigarettes, tobacco, pipes, razor blades, and almost any other article that has a cash value. In some cases small pieces of paper are used, each piece representing an I.O.U. of one-tenth of a cent.

All the card tables are in use whenever the recreation room is open. This does not mean that all these men are gambling,

for playing cards for money is done mostly in the evenings when the men come in from panhandling, working on the bills, doing odd jobs, or possibly come back from the handbooks. Moreover, gambling at cards is sporadic and one may be around the shelters for several days without seeing very much of it, while on another day he may see ten or fifteen games going at full blast.

Not all gambling at cards is carried on within the shelters. Some of the cheap joints along West Madison, North Clark, and South State are patronized by the men. The house takes a nickel or dime rake-off. These joints regard shelter men as penny-ante stuff and cheap chiselers. However, they feel, "When things are bad you might just as well take whatever you can get."

Gambling in the form of betting on the races is much more prevalent than gambling at cards. The handbooks along West Madison Street, where most of the men place their bets, are among the cheapest gambling joints in the city. In a single block there may be five or more handbooks. They are located in cigar stores, hotels, and other places, including one second-hand clothing store. In these places a group of men ranging up to two hundred jostle each other around, spit, cough, and smoke. A client research worker gives the following description of a visit to one of these cheap handbooks: "I went to a West Madison bookie again this afternoon. Lost my last dime. Same old gang, same rotten smell, same swearing when they lost, same broad smiles when they won. Excuses for everything that went wrong. This bookie is the same as the other ones along West Madison Street. The place is dirty and filty and so are the men."

A dime is the smallest bet accepted in any regular handbook of the type patronized by shelter men. Those men who find this bet too high have two alternatives: several men can pool their funds to raise the minimum ten-cent bet or a man can patronize the louse bookmakers. The louse bookmakers, sometimes called curbstone, bootleg, or alley bookmakers, take nickel and even penny bets and are invariably honest. The men also bet on the horses among themselves, using razor blades, cigarettes, and other small items as substitutes for money.

In the summer of 1935 the police reported that they had closed all gambling places in Chicago. While most of the handbooks were apparently closed, anyone who wanted to bet experienced no difficulty in doing so. A person could go into almost any cigar store along West Madison and lay his bet on the counter.

There are four primary sources from which the men get the money for betting on the horses, namely, begging, borrowing from acquaintances, working at odd jobs, and winning on previous races. Any money that is won in a race is immediately put back in other bets, the reasoning being, "If the horse wins and I get thirty or fifty cents, I feel I can play some more. Then I am playing with 'their' money. So if I lose, what difference does it make?"

The men consume much time and energy in doping the races. They pour over racing literature and racing results in the newspapers and talk for hours on the relative merits of the various horses, the ability of certain jockeys, the condition of the track, the crookedness of the stables and jockeys, and the odds on the horses. On the basis of their reading, con-

versation, and knowledge of the races, even though they may have little or no money to bet, they have a great time doping out how one should place his bets.

Many of the men have worked out a system for placing bets on the right horses. One hears constant discussions of systems of beating the ponies. "Why if I had $20 I could live like a king. This system can't fail." "Well, I've tried lots of systems, and I've gone broke on all of them." "Yes, but not this system. If a guy's careful, he can make it. The only trouble is you get too greedy and then you're out." There are almost as many systems as men playing the horses.

Others play their hunches and are known as hunchers. Many of the men have a good deal of respect for a huncher. One of the research workers overheard the following conversation between two shelter men: "Henry, do you play a system on the horses?" "Yes and no. I play a system, if you call playing my hunches a system." "But, you can't have much luck just playing hunches, you should get a system." "But I do have luck on my hunches. I get hunches in everything and I follow them. It's a kind of funny thing, but I'm right most of the time." If a man fails to play a hunch and his horse wins, he will curse and figure up how much he would have made if he had played his hunch. If on the basis of a hunch a man wins a race, he will talk about it for days, forgetting the races in which his hunches failed to work.

A man who does not gamble on the horses has difficulty in understanding its fascination for those who do. Gambling is exciting and the hope of winning next time is a pull which only the gambler can understand. The strong grip that gambling on the races has on some of the men is revealed by the

following record from the diary of one of the client research workers: "Jimmy and I walked over to West Madison and of course into a bookie. He played and won $1.20 and, although he had said when we went in, 'Let me win a dollar today and you will see me getting out of the joint,' he kept right on playing until he had lost all of his winnings. About that time an acquaintance came along and said, 'Say, Jimmy, I got a sure winner and, if you want a hot tip, place your money on her.' So Jimmy put his original twenty-five cents on this horse. The horse lost. His friend then said, 'Well, that's the way it goes. But the next time that horse runs, she's sure to win.' Those pony players are all the same. They hurrah when they win, curse when they lose, and then start telling of the times they had big money and used to hit regularly. But they mostly end up with, 'A man's a fool to play the ponies. It's a game you can't beat. The smart money is behind the counter.' But still they play."

These men to whom betting on the races has become an obsession will work hard, sell anything that can be turned into cash, sacrifice their last dime and even pleasure with women so that they can bet on the races. Such men eat horses, sleep horses, and talk horses all day long. This is illustrated by Denny, who on being asked, "Do you play the horses?" replied, "Do I play! I put over a parlay the day before yesterday. It paid $16.80. The hell of it was I only had a dime riding on it. Therefore I really didn't get enough to amount to anything. Wait until I get a few dollars ahead. Then I'll hit and make some real dough." The following conversation between two shelter men reveals the dynamic urge to gamble on the races. "You go down on your bended

knee, and say to the bookmaker, 'Here, please take my money,' and all the time you know you haven't a chance to win." The reply was, "Oh, you're nuts. Who t' hell expects to win every time? One of these days I'll hit. I'll be in the money when you're still in the flophouse."

Gambling on the races performs certain positive functions in the lives of shelter men. Many of the men find almost all their pleasures in the handbooks, for it is here that a man secures adventure, interest in life, entertainment, prestige, and hope. In the handbooks a man learns of the big winnings of his friends and this tends to bolster up his spirits, for he feels that luck will be with him one of these days. Here he can have an exciting and thrilling few minutes, for with money on a given horse a man takes the rôle of the jockey and rides the horse to victory or defeat. Here in the handbooks with his own group he is a real man; he is not scoffed at and looked down on as a bum; and, if he wins a few times, he soon gains prestige and esteem.

Playing the ponies gives a man something for which to live. Such statements as, "If I put this horse over," or "If this three-horse parlay comes through," or "Some day I'll hit them to the tune of grands and then watch me get out of this dump," illustrate the hope and enthusiasm that comes to those who bet on the horses. Many of the men have made the statement that their only hope of getting out of the shelters is through betting on the horses. Of course this is not true, but the significant thing is that the men experience a dynamic feeling of hope and anticipation which their constant losses fail to dampen. The following extreme statement of the value of gambling in giving the men hope was

made by one of the men: "If it wasn't for the fact that the pony players always hope and constantly look for a future change in luck, many of them would commit suicide."

Constant betting on the horses keeps the men broke. The general attitude is, "You might as well spend your money and be broke as have only ten cents." This means that a man will end by being broke, for when he gets a dollar he has the same idea that he might as well be broke as have only a dollar, and so on for five dollars, ten dollars, or more. While the ultimate financial goal varies considerably, the following typifies the general attitude: "Now, if I had $2,000, I would have enough to live on; the ponies owe me that and I will keep after them until I get it." Consequently, these men are continually striving for what the horses "owe" them, and this results most of the time in the necessity of begging or borrowing even the dime to bet on a race.

Irregular Sex Behavior

In most cases irregular sex behavior began before the men entered the shelters. The attachments of Hobohemians to women were as casual as their attachments to jobs. When they entered the shelters they made little adjustment in their sexual lives. The principal difference was that, because of reduction in income, they were forced to visit prostitutes less frequently and to patronize a cheaper type.

Non-Hobohemians, on the other hand, were more stable in their sexual attachments. In former years some of them enjoyed regular marital relationships, others had common-law wives, and still others had recourse to women friends or went week after week to the same prostitute.

When they entered the shelters, they were compelled to make more radical adjustments in their sex conduct. Such factors as meagerness of funds, unpresentable clothing, and shame acted as barriers to the continuation of prior sex behavior. "Lack of front and dough stop us from seeing the women we used to know." Some of these men complain bitterly about sex deprivation. "If I do without women in this place some will say that I do not need them, that sex is not necessary. This is just foolishness. If a man goes without water, does that mean that he does not need it, especially if the man is in a desert where there is no water? I tell you that I feel sick when I am away from women. I am a married man, the father of children, and even the sight of a woman is helpful to me." Another said, "I feel sick to think that I am forced to lead this type of life like men in the prisons. If I ever get on my feet again I will get married and go on relief. I thought that by staying single as long as I could not support a family I was doing the sporting thing, but I see now that I had the wrong idea. I should have got me some girl and then the two of us would have gone on relief."

In order to determine what proportion of the men lead a fairly regular sex life, ten selected shelter men in the course of casual conversation questioned 400 random shelter men. This study revealed that about 40 per cent made visits to prostitutes or other women, and that the average frequency was approximately once in six weeks.

A more detailed study was made of 90 random cases in four shelters. Seventy of these were linesmen, and twenty were staff workers who received from two to five dollars a week. While this sample was small and perhaps not rep-

resentative, the study showed that 60 per cent of the linesmen had not had intercourse within a year, whereas only 15 per cent of the staff men had not had intercourse in that time. It showed also that while 80 per cent of the staff men had had intercourse within one month only 20 per cent of the linesmen had. It was found for both linesmen and staff workers that the more frequent the visits the cheaper the price paid. The average price paid by those who had visited women within a month was 25 cents, and the price range was from 50 cents to a ten-cent half pint of whiskey. The average price paid by those who had visited women within 2 to 12 months was 85 cents, and by those within 13 to 36 months $1.75.

These very cheap prices mean that the men resort to the least desirable types of prostitutes, many of whom are older women, but "An old woman isn't so bad after her nose is powdered." Also, these prostitutes may be "bottle bums," who will exchange sexual favors for a bottle of booze. This is particularly prevalent in West Madison Street and Bug House Square.

If the search for an inexpensive white woman is unavailing, a man may go to a Negro prostitute. This is not reprehensible in the eyes of the group. The Negro prostitutes are generally younger than the available white prostitutes, more readily accessible, and more tolerant of the obvious faults of the shelter men. "I must forget color. White women don't want me; I do not have money enough. The black woman takes what I have to give her and does not bawl me out because that is all I have."

The greater the length of time in the shelters the greater

is the tendency for a man to cross the color line. During the first year or two he may prefer to wait until he can accumulate enough money to go to a white prostitute; in addition he may believe that Negro prostitutes offer greater danger of venereal diseases and assault or robbery. But the others ridicule the person who is timid in such respects. One of the shelter men explained, "Sooner or later a man who at the time of shelter entrance was antagonistic to and fearful of black women may be shamed into crossing the color line. He is made to feel that he is not a man until he does. Eventually he may accompany a group to a colored house of prostitution and after a few visits come to feel that he has little to fear."

Prostitutes exploit the men by methods which range from begging to robbery. One man reports that a prostitute stole his false teeth for which he had paid $110 when he had been employed. Another man reported that a prostitute to whom he had paid 50 cents stole nine dollars from his pocket.

Masturbation is widely practiced, and is not condemned but is openly admitted by many men. They maintain that it is preferable to the cheap prostitutes patronized by shelter men.

In the study of 90 shelter men, it was found that 7 per cent stated that they were engaging in homosexual practices. This is probably not a larger proportion than would have been found among the same men prior to shelter entrance. The pervert is regarded as having a low status, even in Hobohemia, and there are relatively few of this type in the shelters.

Many substitutes for overt sex expressions are used by the men. The reasons for using these substitutes include

poverty, inhibition against cheap prostitutes, prejudice against Negro prostitutes, loyalty to earlier cultural values, and loyalty to the memory of a deceased wife. Walking is one of these substitutes. "In the morning I get out and go for a ten mile walk. I find my meal somewhere and if I don't, I do without. Then I walk the ten miles back to the shelter. When I get back I'm usually tired enough to hit the hay and stay there. So why should broads [women] bother me?" Some of the younger men go to dances in the foreign settlements or the cheap dance halls, although this is frequently a means of securing intercourse rather than a substitute for it.

Another substitute activity consists of watching women in the parks and on the beaches. "The Oak Street Beach is the mecca of the sex-starved shelter men. They leave the shelter each day after breakfast and go over to the beach and sit and dream and wonder if the big blonde will come again today. That the girls do not even notice them is but the more reason why the men should come to this spot. Some of the younger men have bought bathing suits for fifteen cents and have a front which passes at the beach. For most of the men, just to be in the vicinity of women and look at them is sufficient reason for making a daily trip to the beach."

Some substitute drinking and gambling for sex. The man who "eats, drinks, and talks ponies" all day long has little distress about sex. Also, when one is drinking he forgets about women. "Why should I spend my cash on some cheap prostitute? I'd rather get drunk and stay drunk and forget all about women."

Begging

Begging is, to a considerable extent, a means of raising money for the other three vices—drinking, gambling, and sex practices. It is an old experience for some and a new experience for others. Many of them begged occasionally, and a few begged habitually prior to the depression or to their entrance into the shelters. This was true especially of the chronic alcoholics, home guard casuals, and migratory laborers. On the other hand, few of those who had been established and steady workers begged until after they reached the shelters. In these cases the formation and development of the practice of begging is to some extent related to shelter policies.

Shelter policies tend to promote begging in at least three ways. The shelters, being located in Hobohemia, initiate many of the men into a culture in which begging is customary. Also, the pressure of hunger is a factor. Until 1935 the shelters provided only two meals a day at an average cost of about four cents per meal. Dietitians report that these two meals furnished an adequate number of calories, but the men were accustomed to three meals a day and they felt the necessity of getting money for a third meal. Even after the shelters, in 1935, began to serve three meals a day, the men still used hunger as an excuse for begging. The typical statement is, "Do you call this food? Why, you can't get filled up on this. So what do you think I do? I go out on the stem. So what, if I get caught? If they get me before a judge, I'll tell him that I was hungry."

Third, the shelters limit assistance to the basic needs of

food, lodging, and some clothing, supplemented until the summer of 1935 by fifty cents a month in return for nominal work. The men need cash to buy such things as razor blades, shaving soap, tobacco, and for carfare. While the fifty cents a month may have been adequate for these things, the men, even when they were getting the fifty cents, needed money for drinking, gambling, and sex. While a razor blade may seem important to a person in the middle class, it is less important than a drink to a person who has been a regular drinker.

Once initiated into the practice of begging, whether because of hunger or other reasons, some men find it easier to beg than to work at the jobs available to shelter men, such as unloading trucks, unloading boats, or peddling bills. "I've tried to go out and peddle bills but it's hard carrying twenty-five to thirty pounds of paper around all day. I don't do it now. I go out and beg. I started this stuff a couple of years ago. The eats in the shelter were enough to kill anyone. I hadn't been accustomed to living like that and so I began to beg."

The reactions of the men to begging vary from shame to pride. The cultural background of some of the men makes begging an impossible activity; others say that they cannot engage in panhandling because of lack of nerve. "Before I panhandle I starve to death, because I can't get up my nerve to ask a man for money." Some of the men refrain from begging because they fear they might meet a former friend or acquaintance. Moreover, they have mental conflict as they converse in their imagination with these former friends and acquaintances. Others seem to have little or no feeling of

shame. "I have never been ashamed of begging and I don't see why anyone else should be. Because I bum a man is no reason for him to give me money if he doesn't feel like doing it. Why when I was flush I never disliked a man that asked me for a hand-out."

There are many forms of begging. Of these the most prevalent and obvious is street begging. "Some will stem, missing no one. Many of this group are today begging from $1 to $1.50 each day. A man who can make $1.50 is much envied by the less daring. This is going on every day." Probably few make as much as a dollar a day at panhandling. Generally speaking, the men are content if they secure 25 or 50 cents.

Some of the men, lacking the nerve or being unwilling to beg money on the street, confine themselves to mooching for food or clothing. "I don't beg anybody on the street. I never try to and I don't think it would go well with me, but I do go from store to store and try to get some bread and meat." "If I had to depend on my stemming I'd be dead long ago. I just don't beg people on the street. When I've gotten hungry, I've gone into the restaurants and asked for some food." A good many disguise their real purpose of begging by offering to exchange their services for clothing, which, if secured, can be sold in Hobohemia for cash.

"Borrowing" from former friends is a generally accepted practice among shelter men. While many isolate themselves completely from former friends, others have relatives or acquaintances in the city whom they see occasionally. Whenever a man goes to visit friends he is supposed to come back with some money. Some approach former Union acquaint-

ances. "There are a lot of times that I go to the Union place and ask Union men for some money. I say, 'Remember, I don't want this as a donation. I'll take it now but I'll pay you back later.' Some of my old-time buddies at the Union hall often give me some money." Other men openly tell their friends that they are in the shelter, in order to let it be known that they are in need of assistance. "Usually my friends are the drivers I used to work with. But I never ask them for money. I stop and talk to them. Some of them slip me a half or a quarter when they see I need help. I've got some good friends yet."

Borrowing from other shelter men is another form of begging. The men resent this, saying, "The man who will bum a bum is the lowest type of beggar." This attitude is illustrated in the following statement: "Some men around here are always wanting something. That one just wanted to borrow my thread. I told him it was put away in my box but I had it in my pocket. I wouldn't have any left if I listened to them. I've gotten so that whenever a man says, 'Give me a match—give me some tobacco,' I say, 'I don't have any'."

Peddling small articles is essentially a form of begging. Shoestrings, pencils, and razor blades are the typical articles peddled. "I eat breakfast and then go out and peddle little things. Some days I make 10 or 15 cents. Sometimes for two or three days I don't make anything and then sometimes I may make a quarter." These pencil peddlers think of themselves as having a higher status than the regular panhandlers.

The technique of begging is a skill which has to be acquired. Many men learn the technique of begging from

other shelter men. This is done in part by a successful beggar taking a novice out and actually teaching him how to beg and in part by the transmission through casual conversation of information on the technique, the dangers, and the most profitable places.

The technique of begging was explained to one of the client research workers, who one day accepted the invitation of a shelter panhandler to go along with him on a begging trip. The research worker gives the following report of his experiences: "As I was going into one of the shelters a man stopped me, saying, 'Could you stake me to a dime? I got to get a dime to get started on.' 'Started on what?' 'On the stem. But before I go out, I got to get a drink. I'm shaky as hell. Soon as I get myself together I'm going to quit drinking.' In a few minutes the man came back and said, 'Would you like to go out with me on the stem? You've got a pretty good front and you should be able to get a tumble.' 'O.K., Bud. I'm kind of new at this. You'll have to wise me up as to what kind of people can be stemmed and where to go.' 'Stick to me and I'll show you how it's done.'

"Walking down Halsted we picked up a couple of transfers punched an hour later. We boarded a north-bound car. 'We'll get off at Fullerton. That ain't a bad spot and we'll work north from there.' As we got off at Fullerton he said, 'Now watch me. I'll nail that guy coming down the street.' He had no success. Walking about 10 feet farther he asked a middle-aged gentleman and I believe he got a nickel.

"Coming back to me he said, 'Now the main thing to do is to watch out for these flatfoots [police]. You've got to be pretty careful. Another thing, young guys are best stemming.

What beats them is women sitting in cars. When you approach these people you've got to have confidence in yourself as though you expect to get it, but don't demand it otherwise they get tough with you, and don't give them an argument. With these guys, tell them you're a married man with children or that you're waiting for your grocery and rent order to come through. Meanwhile you haven't got enough to eat. The same goes with the dicks [detectives] if you get gustled. Tell them you can't live on that $15 a month order. Another good line is to tell them you just got out of the Cook County Hospital or out of the county poorhouse, or some place like that. Or you might tell them that you expect to get a job in a couple of weeks. If they take you to a restaurant, order something light that don't cost too much and ask them for the difference and say you need it for a flop for the night.'

"My tutor went on hitting them and then I saw him talking to a middle-aged woman. She seemed to be asking him a lot of questions and after about five minutes of conversation she handed him a nickel. He came back to me and blustered, 'That cheap lousy broad. She asked me more questions than a bank would about lending a million dollars. I felt like throwing the nickel in her face.' After he had made a few more touches he said, 'Hell, this is enough for today. I've got enough to get a couple of jugs and some over for cigarettes. Let's get going back'."

While this begging technique may appear rather well developed, it is quite amateurish when compared with that of the professional beggar. Many of these professional beggars are cripples. A cripple, in talking with a man who was pre-

sumably another bum but was really a research worker, reported the following on his begging activities and technique: "Being a cripple I have to bum most of my money. Now today I made fifty-five cents. I got up at four o'clock and by six I was at work out at 71st Street, working the people going to the Rock Island train on their way to the Loop. Sometimes I do not go out to these outlying places. I have regular routes along Jewish streets, such as Roosevelt, Kedzie, Division, Lawrence, and Sixteenth. I work one side of the street one day and the other side the next. I'll go into a store on my crutches and, if there are customers, I'll take off my hat and hold it out, generally picking up a few pennies. If there are no customers, I do not take off my hat and I don't say a word. Generally, if the man is a foreign-born Jew, he will give me a penny or two. American-born Jews and American business men are the hardest to touch. They never tell you they won't give you anything, they simply say, 'The boss isn't in.' Before the depression it was a lot easier to bum than now, for people don't give as large amounts and there are a lot more bumming. For instance, over on Roosevelt the other day I passed six or seven working the same street and the stores undoubtedly get tired being bummed so much. Just like every other business, bumming suffers when there is too much competition.

"Sometimes I work depots and once in a while I work the Loop, but the police watch the Loop too closely. Some of the police are pretty good people, simply telling you to move on; others carry you away in the wagon. But in ten years' experience I have only been picked up two or three times. They have given me many bawlings out and orders to move

on and stay out of the Loop. But they seem to be more lenient with cripples."

Another professional beggar gives the following points to keep in mind if one wants to be a good beggar: "The idea is to hit younger people, particularly the man with the pretty girl, for the man is unwilling to let the girl think he is a cheap-skate. Another good type to touch is the man who gives you 'the brother eye,' for he is liable to be some sort of a religious nut who is in the habit of giving dough to people. I like to ask old women Sunday morning near churches, for this is the time when they are at peace with the world, feel holy and good, and feel that giving alms to the beggar is the religious thing to do.

"I use all the regular stories, but the one that works the best for me is when I ask the man for a quarter for the price of a meal. I never make the mistake of asking a man for a nickel for a cup of coffee, for people have heard that story too often. People like to hear something different and sometimes a man will give you something just because he knows that you have given him a new story which he can tell at the office.

"I believe that the dirtier the man is the better for the street make. If I am dirty, a man will give me a coin rather than have me walk with him down the street and have people think I might be one of his friends. I always walk along with the man I might be bumming. Of course, I get bawled out for it, but this is all a part of the day's work. And a man that can't take a bawling out has no business to go out on the stem. I think the best method a man can use in stemming is to walk along with a couple. Women are sensitive

to the presence of a dirty bum going along with them and are very likely to give a coin to get rid of him. It often helps to turn from the man to the woman saying, 'Sweet lady, you know how it is, for the love of Jesus won't you spare a bum the price of a drink of whiskey?' This is apt to arouse the amusement of the couple and make them come through.

"In the long run the ability to beg is the ability to take the cussing the public hands you. That is the reason junkers [drug addicts] are the best beggars; they are usually so hopped up with dope that they don't mind if they are bawled out every time they put the 'b' on a man. There are a few men in the shelters that are on marijuana and they, together with the alcoholics, make the best beggars. I do not know of any drug addicts in this shelter, but if there were, they would be the birds to show you the fine art of begging. I learned what I know of the racket from an old bird that was on the junk and had to have more money than he was able to earn."

The control of begging is left to the police. They make periodic drives in the Loop area, hauling in everyone who is engaging in activities that are even remotely connected with begging. They made a drive of this nature on November 13, 1934, which was given wide publicity in the newspapers.

A member of the research staff was in court at the time of the trial and made an analysis of the records of the cases. Although the newspapers reported that from 225 to 250 beggars were arrested, the records showed only 189. Of this number 73, or approximately 38 per cent, gave shelter

addresses. Of those who gave shelter addresses 12 per cent were sentenced to the house of correction, while of those who gave other addresses 41 per cent received this sentence. This is particularly interesting in the light of the shelter men's belief that they get more severe penalties for begging than other men do. When the judge asked where a man lived and in reply received a shelter address, he generally said, "Oh, you live in the shelters. Dismissed. Next case."

This attitude of the court may have been determined by the fact that most of the men were not actually begging. Tucked away in one of the newspaper articles was the statement, "No. 1 man in the throng of 200 before Judge Dunn's bench was Ernest Heath, a shelter-house dweller with a hawklike profile and, in spite of advanced years, a thick head of blond hair. 'I was only waiting at the "L" station, hoping a passenger would give me a paper,' he explained. 'I wasn't begging, unless you can call that begging.' Heath was discharged with a warning to stay out of the Loop."[2]

At the time of their arrest 82 per cent of the shelter men were under the elevated stations on Wells Street, and 7 per cent at the Illinois Central station on Randolph Street waiting for the newspapers which unemployed men get each morning from train riders. Thirteen were arrested at one time at Wells and Randolph, fifteen at Wells and Quincy at another time, and twelve at Wells and Quincy at still another time. Moreover, those who were arrested at these elevated exits were all arrested between 7 and 9:30 A.M. The other 11 per cent of the arrests were scattered through the Loop and along the edges of the Loop and occurred be-

[2] Chicago *Daily News,* November 13, 1934.

tween 10 A.M. and 5:15 P.M.; these arrests probably involved real begging.

The main emphasis of the court was, "Stay out of the Loop." That statement was made again and again. In fact, in some instances a judge even stated, "If you have to beg, do it anywhere but in the Loop."

It was apparent on Wells Street the following morning that the drive against beggars and those men waiting in line for papers was not entirely effective. While the paper lines were somewhat shorter, there were still men at every station. When one of them was asked whether he was afraid of being arrested and sent to the Bridewell he said, "Oh, what the hell, it will probably be three or four months before they will get a buzz on that again."

It seems that Loop interests are definitely and aggressively antagonistic to begging and related activities in the business district. Business men along Wells Street do not want the sidewalks in front of their places of business filled with disreputable-looking men who are waiting for papers under the elevated stations. The public library does not wish these men to loiter in its rooms or around the entrance to the building. Moreover, some of the Chicago newspapers are unwilling to have these men in the Loop because it is felt that they will collect papers under the elevated stations and then sell them, thus cutting down newspaper sales. Therefore, these and other interests put pressure on the police to curtail the activities of panhandlers and others whose presence in the Loop may be detrimental to the best interest and appearance of this area. As a result of these pressures the police wage periodic campaigns against beggars.

CHAPTER VII

THE PROCESS OF SHELTERIZATION

A resident of a shelter made the following statement regarding shelterization: "When I came in here the case worker advised me against it. He said that they have a term they use for men who go into the shelters and stay there for a few months. They say the men become shelterized. They become satisfied with the shelters, get into a rut and can't get out, and I believe he's right."

Shelterization is a process involving a change in status, an adjustment to the shelter situation, and a degree of identification with the shelter group. In this process the attitudes and values of the men are reorganized in response to and on the basis of patterns of behavior common to the shelter situation. The process of shelterization is organically related to attitudes and behavior patterns acquired previous to life in the shelter. Shelterization, in fact, is adaptation not only to the shelters but to the total situation in which a man finds himself. The total situation includes being unemployed and dependent on public relief, living in the slum area of the city, being isolated from former social and economic contacts, having disheartening experiences with employment agencies and business concerns, and either being or approaching the age when re-employment in industry is unlikely.

These prior experiences form a preliminary step in the shelterization process. The men had undergone such disheartening experiences as being out of work and being unsuccessful in the search for jobs. They had lost confidence

in themselves and in their social world. Many of them had gone to the extent of pawning clothes, borrowing money from friends, going hungry, and sleeping in parks or hallways for a few days. The decision to enter a shelter was in many cases the surrender of a man's highest values and was made as a last resort. "I had slept in Grant Park for a few nights; I was cold and hungry. I went to one of the shelters and looked it over and said to myself, 'It will be hell to be identified with that group of bums, but you will either have to go to a shelter or jump in the lake.' After two or three more nights in the park, I went to the shelters."

The first overt step in the shelterization process occurs when the man goes to the central intake department. He has what he considers to be two simple needs—a place to sleep and something to eat—and yet he finds himself subjected to a lot of questioning which he regards as irrelevant and which irritates and depresses him. He observes that most of the men who are applying for relief are shabbily dressed and have a general unkempt appearance. During these days at the Intake he is initiated to shelter food and sleeping accommodations and comes to the conclusion that he simply cannot stand the accommodations and associations of the shelters and that he must make every effort to get out as soon as possible. He expects to use the shelter as a temporary abode until he can find a job and can move to a private lodging house. In general, the new man is industrious in looking for work, but when his efforts continually end in failure and when he sees that most of the men have given up the struggle, he tends to adopt the attitude that the whole world is against him and that he has no chance to get back on his

feet. Thus month after month goes by, the man still stays in the shelter, and his extended stay almost inevitably results in his becoming shelterized.

After a period of time a man becomes less sensitive, suffers less mental conflict, becomes listless and indifferent, lowers his resistance against becoming absorbed by and identified with the shelter group, and acquires the customs and traditions of the shelters, including its activities and universe of discourse, its lingo and pet subjects of conversation. He shows a tendency to lose all sense of personal responsibility for getting out of the shelter; to become insensible to the element of time; to lose ambition, pride, self-respect, and confidence; to avoid former friends; and to identify himself with the shelter group. When a man goes through such experiences as these he has experienced the process of shelterization.

All men are not shelterized to the same degree. For the most part differences in the ease and extent of shelterization can be traced to two closely related factors: the neighborhood in which a man had his more permanent residence, and the economic type to which he previously belonged. Shelterization also varies somewhat with the type and location of the shelter. For instance, the shelter for the younger white collar men is located outside of the flophouse area; the men are given more individualized treatment and have private sleeping quarters. The men in this shelter, while affected to some degree, are not shelterized to the same extent as those residing in the larger shelters located in Hobohemia. In general, the principal differences in shelterization are between Hobohemians and non-Hobohemians. The Hobohemians'

ideas and behavior in the shelters are continuous with those of their past life. There is little change in geography from West Madison Street to the shelters, and the change in culture is no greater than the change in geography. Non-Hobohemians make a decided change both geographically and culturally when they enter the shelters. While neither group is completely homogeneous, they are characteristically different from each other in their reactions to the shelters.

The following discussion presents some of the specific aspects of shelterization. These specific aspects include the adjustment to such external things as food and regimentation, and second, psychological changes in attitudes, such as the adoption of the rôle of the dependent, deterioration toward the level of the bum, changes in work attitudes, absorption of common emotional attitudes, adoption of collective ideas, and third, the culmination of the shelterization process in certain typical adjustments to the shelter situation.

Adjustment to Food and Regimentation

The chief subject of conversation in the shelters is food: the men curse "the slop" served by the shelters or curse those men who "eat like pigs." Frequently the food is insufficient, not of good quality, and served in a way which is not appetizing. However, these things are not a sufficient explanation of the complex against shelter food. One of the main reasons for the attitude toward shelter food is that mass feeding fails to satisfy the desire for freedom in the choice of menu and for privacy in eating. It is true that many of the men have been accustomed to a coarse diet and to eating in cheap restaurants. But it is one thing for a man

to go to the Penny Cafeteria on Madison, choose stew and macaroni, and go to a corner and eat his meal, and quite another to line up and have some stew and macaroni thrown on his plate, be herded to a table, and be unable to choose his table companions.

Men of a higher cultural background find the table manners of some of the other men nauseating. "The greatest shock on coming into the shelter was the way men eat. They aren't cattle or horses for there is a nicety in the way a cow laps up grass but they are just hogs, even to the grunting. They just guzzle their food—sloppy, greedy."

Regimentation is another point of irritation among the men. This consists of imposing many regulations upon the men and lining them up on every possible occasion. The men are known as linesmen and they say it is a good name, because for one thing or another they are in line most of the day. Waiting in line for meals, which is called "the breadline shuffle," has been described as follows: "Thirty minutes of shuffle, shuffle, shuffle, one foot dragging behind the other. No one walks. The line doesn't move that fast. A long line of men, body to body, dragging their slow length along inch by inch. Shuffle, shuffle, shuffle, their shoulders moving in unison, monotonous repetition. Aimless lives, going for sustenance that they may live aimlessly on."

Regimentation, with its regulation and control over so many of the activities of the men and its requirement of constant waiting in line, makes the men dependent upon others for most of the things connected with their personal well-being. It lowers their morale, wastes time which might be used in looking for work, breeds a spirit of frustration and

antagonism, emphasizes the men's dependency, and makes them assume less responsibility for their own welfare.

Hobohemians adjust more easily to shelter food, regimentation, and other external conditions than do non-Hobohemians. Hobohemians were habituated to a poor and coarse diet and feel at home in flophouses. The regimentation of the shelters may interfere somewhat with their freedom but it is easy to over-emphasize this. For non-Hobohemians the situation is generally quite different. They were accustomed to much better food, a better bed, and a private room in a home or better class hotel. As a result, non-Hobohemians are much more disturbed by the external conditions of the shelters than are Hobohemians.

Psychological Tensions

A part of the criticism and bitterness which shelter men express against the external factors of the shelters is undoubtedly warranted by the facts. However, in large part this criticism and bitterness is a means of giving vent to psychological tensions by transferring them to external objects. It will therefore be well to examine some of these psychological tensions and changes in attitudes.

Dependency. A mental shock of varying degrees of intensity is caused by dependency. Dependency was no new experience to Hobohemians, for bums had dependency as one of their basic patterns of life, and home guard casuals and migratory workers had panhandled occasionally when necessity demanded it. On the other hand, dependency was a new experience for most white collar workers, skilled tradesmen, and steady unskilled workers. The acceptance of de-

pendence for non-Hobohemians was an infraction of their basic code. A man who has the traditional individualistic American idea that a man who is industrious and persevering can get and hold a job, receives a severe mental jolt when he finds himself unable to supply even the bare necessities of life and has to become dependent on public relief. If a man's philosophy makes the acceptance of relief not only a disgrace but an index of his ability, success, and personal worth, then when he finds himself actually an inmate of a shelter he is shocked, confused, and perplexed; he engages in worry and self-questioning; and he tends to discredit and mistrust himself and to lose his self-respect. A man who experiences this crisis undergoes a disintegration of his previous attitudes, modes of thought, and standards of conduct. His personality is then reorganized in such a way as to avoid the discrepancy between his philosophy and his actual experiences as a dependent.

Deterioration toward the level of the bum. Men who stay in the shelters for a considerable period tend to deteriorate toward the level of the bum, losing the desire to work, allowing clothes to become ragged and dirty and personal appearance unpresentable, and securing an income by begging. In many cases deterioration is simply a continuation of a trend that had its inception prior to shelter entrance. Many home guard casuals and migratory workers were inadequate in their social and economic relationships and had a status that was not far removed from the level of the bum. In some cases of the higher status groups the process of deterioration was well started even before the depression, was speeded up during the months immediately prior to

shelter entrance, and was greatly accentuated as a result of shelter influences.

Deterioration toward the level of the bum is in part due to the fact that the men feel that they are regarded as bums by the public, the case workers, and the other shelter men. They say that the public policy of locating the shelters in the area of the city where bums reside is a concrete expression of the attitude of the public toward the group. This is seen in such statements as, "One thing I worry about is that nobody respects you if they know you're in the flophouse," "People think one is in the poorhouse if he is in a shelter," and "I can just hear the people say as they go by and see the bums line the street around the shelter, 'Oh, look at the bums from the shelter house.' " Some of the men, particularly the non-Hobohemians, are greatly troubled as they imagine the contempt and disgust that their relatives and friends feel toward bums.

The men believe that the shelter staff and case workers think of them as bums and no-accounts and do everything in their power to make them feel inferior. Many of the lower paid staff men, particularly the watchmen, "think they are the Rocky Mountains," or "think they are God Almighty and lord it over the linesmen." Moreover, most case workers are abrupt and inconsiderate. They have an exceptionally heavy case load and necessarily keep the men waiting a long time. However, the men credit their long waits to "the simple cussedness of case workers."

As a result the men tend to adopt an antagonistic attitude toward the shelter staff. They fight back by calling watchmen such epithets as flunkies, boot-lickers, dog-keepers, and just

ordinary bums, and speaking of case workers as grave-yard buzzards and case makers. They feel, "The fakers are just as much on relief as the men; the only difference between the case worker and me is that he is on relief and doesn't know it, and I *know* I am a charity patient." This antagonism toward the shelter staff tends to unite the men into a more homogeneous group and tends to make a man identify himself with "the other shelter bums."

Shelter men use the term "bum" to describe other men and also themselves. When a man places himself in the category of the bum, he generally puts the blame on the shelters, saying, "The shelters made a lousy bum out of me. A bum is anyone that isn't working, that's dependent on charity, that's dressed in rags, and can't go out in decent society. Therefore the shelters make most of us into bums." After a few weeks or months in a shelter a man is likely to lose his physical and psychological front and this tends to identify him with the bum group. His clothes become dirty and shabby and take on the flophouse smell; his shoes become worn; and he goes unshaven and looks unkempt. As his clothes become less presentable, he tends to isolate himself from relatives, friends, and occupational acquaintances, and tends to live in and identify himself with the world of those who are indifferent as to personal appearance and behavior. This process of breaking with one's past social world without having a correspondingly satisfying social world in which to participate is a serious factor in personal disorganization. As a man confines his activities to the world of the shelters, he tends to adopt certain behavior patterns, such as begging and snipe-shooting. Both of these practices are against city

ordinances and the shelter man knows that he places himself in the bum class when he engages in them. Consequently he tends to adopt the attitude, "There is no use for me to try, for I look like a bum and act like a bum, and probably the public is right in thinking that I am a bum."

Changes in work attitudes. A modification of work attitudes is another psychological change experienced by the men in the process of shelterization. This change in work attitudes is an almost inevitable accompaniment of a considerable stay in the shelters. In their prior lives the great bulk of the men had work as their chief value. Work was "in their bones," the men orienting most of their values and their interests in reference to their work. A period of unemployment was no new experience for most of them. However, when unemployment stretched on into two or three years, when dependency in a shelter had to be accepted, and when in place of work, which was a means to many desired ends, day after day had to be spent in the idleness and monotony of the shelters, many of the men experienced emotional tensions which finally gave way to some sort of adjustment to the situation. If men who desire and prefer to work are put in government shelters where they are kept in idleness with little hope of getting jobs, it is inevitable that their work attitudes will change in adaptation to that situation.

The idleness and monotony of the shelters are wearing on the men's spirits. One day in the shelters is about as dull as the next with the exception of Sunday, which is particularly dead. No greater hardship could be imposed on the mass of the men than depriving them of a chance to work

and forcing them to live in relative idleness. A man who has worked all his life and who is suddenly placed in an environment where there are only a couple of days' "made" work a month, finds himself face to face with one of the most difficult problems that could confront him. He goes through a process of emotional disturbance beginning with discouragement and ending with complete loss of morale. Eventually many of the men come to the state which corresponds to stir crazy in prison. Shelter men have coined the phrase "shelter crazy" to denote this state of mind. One man describes his own emotional change thus: "At first I kept looking for work but when I found nothing, I became discouraged and felt there was no way out. I came to the position where I felt that I was an outcast and a person whom society wanted to forget. When I couldn't get work I felt afraid. In time I began to fear my reason. I became timid, shy, and bashful. I tried to get over my fear, for when I went to a place to apply for a job, I knew that my whole attitude was against me. I came to the conclusion that the only road to peace with myself was to say to hell with everything, to quit looking for work, and to resign myself to living in the shelters. Possibly when the government gets tired paying for maintaining the shelters it will get me a job."

The men come to feel that there is a strong probability that anyone who offers a shelter man a job does so with the idea of exploiting him and therefore it is senseless to take proffered jobs. One of the research men who lived in the shelters reports the following incident: "One day a man came down and wanted a dozen husky men to go to work on a truck. No one went. One of the staff men gave the following as an

explanation: 'The fellows have been fooled so much around here by jobs like that, that they won't go out and I don't blame them. Now if that fellow had been honest about that work he would have announced the wages, the number of hours, and the kind of work. But no, he just wanted a dozen husky men and he thought the fellows down here would jump at the chance. I'm glad nobody went. These fellows think that just because they come to the shelters to get men, the men should jump at the chance to work. To hell with them.' "

Many men feel that as far as the future is concerned they have little chance to obtain work. "We are hand workers, while the bulk of occupational increase in this country is for white collar men. We can't be something that we ain't and so it is evident that we are sunk. There is no longer plenty to do. The frontier has gone. When the farmer that owns his land can't hold it, what chance has the man that does not even hold land? There is an oversupply of common labor, and, if there was not, the capitalists would get them over here by the boat load or ship them in from Mexico."

In the process of shelterization the work attitudes of Hobohemians are affected much less than those of non-Hobohemians. The only attitude toward work that bums had was avoidance, and this attitude is not altered when the bums reach the shelters. The home guard casuals and migratory laborers had been accustomed to relatively long period of idleness and, in addition, had been accustomed to living from hand to mouth with little consideration of the future. Their work attitudes have been modified by life in the shelter, but the modification is slight. The shelters have

given Hobohemians a greater feeling of security than they had when they were living a day-to-day existence. In the shelters they have security without effort, and if they are not enjoying this security they are at least not experiencing much mental anguish.

In contrast, non-Hobohemians have experienced radical changes in their work attitudes. White collar workers, skilled tradesmen, and steady unskilled workers have a much keener feeling of the futility of efforts to get work than do those of the lower economic types. Prior to shelter entrance many non-Hobohemians had used every means at their disposal in an attempt to find work, but had experienced constant failure. As a result they now feel that it is futile and foolish to look for work. Because they have been accustomed to looking further into the future, they are now afraid that they will never again get decent jobs and that they will be unable to provide for their old age.

A change in emotional attitudes. The absorption of common emotional attitudes accompanies shelterization, for the atmosphere of the shelters is pregnant with distrust, suspicion, discouragement, apathy, hopelessness, and other feelings. These feelings are in the air and are highly contagious. Those who live in the shelters continually bump into them and soon give expression to similar feelings.

Deception and a feeling that it does not pay to be honest are almost universal among the men. For instance, Mr. Keason has come to feel, "It's a detriment to be honest around here. Now take me. When I came in here, I told them about my last job where I worked about five years, and what do you suppose they did? They wrote to them. That's

a hell of a fine thing to do—to tell them I'm living on relief. What will they think of me to think that I have come down to this? That has certainly ruined me with them if I ever did have a chance." The men say that they have become relief-wise and that means, "Deception is the best method of getting along with the least trouble. It does not pay to be honest in the relief racket."

Men who live in the shelters a few weeks tend to become despondent. Frustration is the natural feeling of those who believe, "Not one man in ninety-nine who has passed forty years and has lived in these flophouses will ever make a come-back," or "I do not think I will ever leave the shelters except for the poorhouse." As a result the heart is taken out of the men, their morale almost vanishes, and they come to feel, "A sign should be hung on the front door of each shelter: 'All hope is lost to ye who enter here.' "

One of the emotional problems of some shelter men is the security of their few material possessions. Some men left possessions at former rooming places or placed them in the shelter check room. A shelter man reports as follows on the sentimental attachment of some of the men to these material things: "Often I have spoken to the men in the moments in which confidences have been exchanged and I have been struck by the number of times that the chief worry of the man was the property that he had left behind. Because the man of a higher cultural level had more of the chattels and the movables of life than the Hobohemian, he worries more about them. In the trunk at home is the picture of the old homestead, the picture of the first-born, or little trinkets valued for sentimental reasons. The loss or the sense of

being separated from these objects is more than many of the men can stand. This is responsible for much of the conflict of some of the men."

The emotional attitudes of shelter men are expressed in the following poem written by a shelter man:

IF IT ISN'T HELL

It's plenty hell to be thwarted,
  And denied every right, honest way,
To add and to share in Life's blessings,
  To labor and pay your own way.

If it isn't hell to be handcuffed
  When hands are wanting to toil,
And all of your efforts go wasted
  In this chaos of world turmoil.

If it isn't hell to have ideals,
  Aspirations, lofty and fine,
Which you're forced to sustain and nourish
  In the ranks of a mean breadline.

If it isn't hell to pillow your head
  At night in a squeaky cot,
And think and think of what might be,
  But which pitifully is not.

If it isn't hell when at last sweet sleep
  With rest, peace, and dreams arrive,
You are awakened from pleasant reverie
  When the watchman bawls out "Half
    past five."

Yes, hell isn't brimstone nor fire,
  Nor just physical aches and pain,
It's the rigors of living in exile,
  The nervous and mental strain.

Collective ideas. Shelterization involves the acceptance by the individual of the common ideas of the shelter group. A person entering the shelter learns the traditions and customs of the shelter group and within a short time uses the words and phrases and expresses the ideas of men who have been in the shelters longer. At first these ideas and attitudes do not seem to be his own, but they become familiar by expression and later become a vital part of himself.

Collective ideas cluster around the administration of relief, economic conditions, missions and charity organizations, and politics. Common ideas on relief include the belief that "from the librarian of the shelters to the big shots there is glue on somebody's fingers"; that the relief business is the biggest business in the world and the most poorly managed; that relief is the natural right of unemployed men and that the government is cheating them in not giving more and better relief; that "made" work is meaningless and useless and that the thing to do is loaf on relief jobs; and that the federal government should provide from $5 to $10 a week and allow the men to shift for themselves.

Common ideas on economic conditions include changes in work attitudes, as previously described, the futility and foolishness of looking for work, the probability that anyone offering a shelter man a job does so with the idea of exploiting him, the impossibility of getting work except through a government work program, and the idea that shelter men have little or no chance to take part in the future economic life of the nation. In addition to these the men have two common ideas on general economic conditions. The first is the belief that economic conditions are getting worse

rather than better. The common expression runs as follows: "The depression is just beginning. Men are coming into the shelters faster than ever and there are more people unemployed and on relief than at any time during the depression. Anyone who says that conditions are improving either is trying to fool the people or is ignorant of true conditions."

The other general idea is that the profit system must be modified so as to provide work and security for the laboring class. While the men applaud anyone who makes a radical statement, they are generally indifferent to such radical programs as communism and fascism. This may be surprising, for it is commonly believed that Hobohemia is a hot-bed of radicalism. The relative weakness of radicalism in the homeless group is possibly due to the persistence of previous conservative beliefs, intellectual sluggishness, and individuated attitudes which lead to concentration on personal problems to the exclusion of all broader social issues.

It is next to impossible for a man to maintain religious values in the environment of the shelters. The general consensus is that all religion is to be classed along with charity organizations as a racket, and that the Salvation Army, the Red Cross, the Y.M.C.A., the Christian Industrial League, and the various missions are all in the business of helping the poor for the money that is in it. All men in the shelters are expected to express anti-religious opinions.

Several political ideas are common to the shelter men. They believe that all politics is graft, that all politicians are crooked, and that it makes no difference who is elected to public offices for nobody will do anything for the men in the shelters. They have found politicians willing and eager to

bargain for votes, and, in general, they have adopted the lodging house tradition of selling their votes to the politician who offers the most. They rationalize this by saying, "Why shouldn't we? Everyone else is getting paid for their votes. So why shouldn't we get an extra half dollar in that way?"

The vote-selling activities of the men in the November election of 1934 were reported as follows by a research worker who lived as a client in the shelters: "Tomorrow is election day and the shelter is a beehive. 'Did you get fixed up for tomorrow?' 'I'm on. It's a couple of bucks, anyway.' 'Wonder how much they are paying for votes this year.' 'Wonder if the Republicans are paying more.' 'Don't be a sap and vote for nothing. No, sir! Vote for the outfit that pays the most. It don't make any difference to us who gets in anyway—we'll still be here.' On election day the men found that the pay-off was not functioning, so for a short period none of the men would vote. 'Hell, I'm not voting until I know where the four bits is coming from.' But in a short while the sign was given that the pay station had been moved a half block, and a little later a steady stream of men was seen filing in and out of the rear door of a saloon. That evening was not nearly as boisterous as had been expected, due to the delayed pay-off."

Collective ideas and feelings exert a tremendous pressure on the men coming into the shelters. Even those research workers who lived in the shelters as clients indicated that they found themselves affected by the ideas of the group. "All one hears around this place is a constant discussion of government, the relief racket, and economic conditions until it naturally gets on one's nerves and soon gets him down

until he just sits back and waits for something to happen. I'm feeling the same way myself." If that is true of the research men who were university graduates and were getting paid for their work, imagine the force of common feelings and ideas on regular clients. In general, the men cannot withstand the pressure and eventually take on the habits of thought and feelings common in the shelter environment. To the extent that they do take on these common ideas and feelings they become shelterized.

End Products of Shelterization

Not all of the men are affected by the shelters. A few of the men, while physically present in the shelters for purposes of lodging and meals, are socially independent and assimilate practically nothing from the culture which surrounds them. As soon as they have finished breakfast they disappear and isolate themselves from other shelter men.

The intellectual radicals are not appreciably affected by their life in the shelters. These men spend much time in the shelters in a vociferous but largely unsuccessful attempt to convert others to their views. Their general attitude of rebellion against the system which they regard as holding them down is now directed also against specific aspects of shelter administration. The following is a typical expression: "The shelters are like jails to us. If they gave the grub to the inmates of the penitentiaries that they give us here, they would burn the place down. And if we had any guts or organization we would burn these places down. Look at those damn bars. They're worse than a jail. In here they crowd us, and crush us, and boss us, and watch us, and make

us stand in line for everything. They treat us as slaves and dogs, certainly not as men."

In contrast to these groups, a large majority of the men make the adaptations to the shelter situation which have been presented as constituting the process of shelterization. This process culminates either in defeatism or in contentment.

Defeatism is an adjustment manifested in the form of patient submission to conditions over which the men feel they have no control. Most of the defeated group are listless and indifferent, but some are constrained to attempt or at least contemplate self-destruction. A good many men express themselves in confidence as did Joe Wazinski: "A lot of times I pass by a bridge and feel like I want to jump in the water. I be all alone by myself. I got nobody. A lot of times I feel like I want to kill myself but I no have the nerve. I be afraid to try it." Robert J. Jordon's feeling of defeat found expression in an actual attempt at suicide: "If I am going to be a bum and associate with bums I would rather a thousand times be dead. All I have now is a place to sleep and something to eat—with bums. I decided there wasn't any hope and decided to do it. I took half of those tablets. Soon I began to feel like an awful rock was pressing down on me very, very sharply. I fixed the bed ready to get in, took the rest of the tablets, and laid down. That was all I knew."

The evidence indicates that at least half of the men are fairly contented and satisfied with life in the shelters. Some of them quickly become contented, while others gradually make a transition from efforts to maintain independence, through a feeling of defeat, to contentment. The following

statement is an illustration of this transition, "I know I am a failure and I haven't a chance at a comeback, so I might as well admit it. You may say that letting go of everything and giving up the struggle is an infantile impulse. But I have learned from experience that acknowledging defeat gives one a feeling of restfulness and peace."

Former residents of Hobohemia quickly and easily become contented in the shelters, for they were practically shelterized before they entered the shelters. Quotations such as the following are typical of the complete contentment of this group: "When you know you are going to get your meals and bed, you feel like you are sitting on top of the world. I like it better every day." "Things might be a lot worse than they are here. I have hoboed some and I have learned to get along with whatever I find." "For the last fifteen years I have been living around Madison Street. I like it better here than in those fifteen-cent rooms. I don't kick against the meals. Sometimes I go out and bum a cup of coffee and a sandwich."

Shelter men who have minor staff jobs tend to become satisfied with their lot in the shelters. One old fellow who had been in the shelters for several months gave some fatherly advice to a research worker who was in the shelters as a client: "Don't let these fellows talk you into a staff job. If you take one of these jobs you only get a few dollars a month and you get *satisfied*. Then it's all up for you. Especially a young fellow like you. An old guy like me—I'm 62—hasn't much to look forward to. No, I'm through, but a young guy has a chance, so don't get downhearted, and don't take a staff job."

Contentment is particularly characteristic of men over sixty. They do not want to go to the Old People's Home and consider a shelter to be a desirable substitute. If it were not for the inconvenience of having to stand in the bread-line, having to follow such regulations as being out of the shelters from nine in the morning until noon, and not being able to lie down during the day, many of them would be completely satisfied to spend the rest of their days in the shelters. "I'm 72 years old. I look pretty young, yet 72 years is a lot of years. But after all what's the use of worrying. It won't give me a job and it might give me wrinkles."

CHAPTER VIII

THE HOMELESS MAN IN HISTORY

Three general types of social treatment—repression, individualization, and mass relief—have been used for homeless men. These may be described as though they were in an approximate sequence, though there is considerable overlapping and intermingling in the history of their use. The first period was characterized by repressive legislation and by methods which were calculated to deter men from accepting relief. Then came the attempt to give them a modicum of individual salvation through conversion by a religious organization or rehabilitation by the case work of a social agency. This approach has necessarily been abandoned in favor of material relief on a mass basis. Each of these programs will be described with reference to the objective conditions from which emerged the problem it attempted to treat, and also with reference to the underlying ideology which was somewhat related to these objective conditions.

Repression and Deterrence

The repressive measures that have been directed at the homeless man have their source in attitudes that are the lineal descendants of the attitude toward the runaway slave or serf. In early English history, the slave or serf who attempted to escape his constricted life by moving to new parts was classed categorically as a vagrant and subjected to heavy penalties. Under the rigid caste system which then existed he had little chance to escape into any other mode

of life save that of begging, frequently under the guise of religion, or of pillaging, frequently done in large bands.

It was not until the emergence of the town and factory and the need for a mobile labor supply that the necessity arose for distinguishing between the vagrant and the man seeking work. The need for factory labor marked the inception of an acceptable moral status for the homeless man, providing of course he was a prospective laborer. To determine his moral status there was devised that famous product of the English almshouse, the work test.

However, the work test was pressed into the service of irreconcilable ends. It was intended to serve, first, as a means of moral identification, i. e., to differentiate the laborer from the vagrant; second, as a method of getting work done at practically no cost; and, third, as a method of deterring others from becoming vagrants. The naive assumptions underlying this last purpose plagued attempts at the reformation of public care for the homeless man for a century.

Relief for the English casual pauper was quasi-penal in character for a greater part of the nineteenth century. The casual ward of the workhouse was usually fashioned like a jail cell, and was over-run with vermin. Planks were used for beds. Dinner consisted of a few slices of bread and one to two ounces of cheese. The casual who accepted this hospitality for the night was detained for work from one-half day to three days, the work usually consisting of oakum-picking (tearing up old hemp ropes into fiber) or stone-breaking. The work test and the conditions of the casual ward sufficed to throw most of the destitute homeless on to the mercies of charitable individuals, or even to drive some to commit

crimes in order that they might be housed in the jails and thus avoid the more rigorous casual wards. Thus organized relief was demoralizing in its inadequacy and ineffectualness, and the available alternatives were equally demoralizing.

The casual ward of the English workhouse was based on the belief that the cause of any increase in vagrancy was located in the lack of enforcement of the law against vagrancy. During most of the nineteenth century each rising tide of vagrancy was met with repressive legislation aimed at making more severe the conditions of movement and of relief for the destitute homeless. It failed to take account of the necessity for migration inherent in the new industrial system and of the periodic drying up of the economic and social bases for stability and attachment. Consequently the attitude of deterrence, resulting in legislative acts of a repressive character, did not touch the fundamental problem.

America followed the English example of linking the homeless man with the crime of vagrancy. The homeless were driven out of town, committed to workhouses, and, when temporary shelter was necessary, were permitted to sleep on the floors of police stations. Late in the century, when the police stations became inadequate for temporary shelter, municipal lodging houses were developed. Frequently these were under the control of the police and a work test was often administered, much as in the English workhouse.

The early literature in America dealing with homeless men was directed largely at the beggar and the vagrant. The repressive and deterrent aspects of American thought on the problem of homeless men is seen as late as 1907 in the fol-

lowing summary of a report made to the National Conference of Charities and Correction by Orlando F. Lewis: "Vagrancy is a national problem; the treatment of vagrancy for the present should be deterrent; present methods neither sufficiently helpful nor deterrent; present work tests do not materially diminish vagrancy; but, attempts to prevent vagrancy are more important than attempts to cure it; the town should provide separate houses or separate quarters in almshouses for the vagrants; municipal lodging houses should be established in all cities with vagrancy problems; vagrants trespassing on railroad property should be imprisoned at hard labor; greater cooperation between towns and railroads in prosecuting vagrants; the railroad trespass laws should be strengthened and enforced; special state police officers should be appointed to aid in prosecuting vagrants; in cities troubled with the problem, there should be a plain clothes officer to suppress mendicancy; the department of public health should prescribe adequate rules for the maintenance and supervision of common lodging houses; missions giving food or lodging should require reasonable work; there should be at least one compulsory labor colony in each state, with indeterminate sentence; the relation of state boards of charity and control to vagrancy legislation should be active."[1]

In general, the whole class of homeless wanderers, irrespective of their origin, were categorically treated as vagrants and dealt with repressively. Very little attempt was made, either in Europe or America, to approach the problem of

[1] Orlando F. Lewis, "Vagrancy in the United States," *Proc. Natl. Con. Soc. Work,* 1907, pp. 52-70.

classification of the homeless in a realistic way. The work test was supposed to provide an automatic classification by eliminating the vagrants habitually opposed to work. But almost without exception the unattached and destitute man fell under the moral opprobrium that was the counterpart of the strong individualism of the country. The attitude was that those who were industrious and persevering could always find work and that those who became destitute were lacking in moral fiber.

The policy of repression was an attempt to prevent mobility, which was an inevitable result of the social and economic changes. It was an attempt to preserve a social order which was being modified by forces so powerful that the puny efforts of the poor law guardians were completely futile if not positively harmful.

Individualization

In the face of the severity of the keepers of industrial morality and the failure of the policy of repression and deterrence to touch the fundamental problems of the destitute homeless, it was only natural that other means of succoring this group should grow up, motivated by a somewhat different bias. This appeared in the form of individualized treatment by religious and social service agencies. These retained in varying degrees the old attitude of deterrence and repression, but leavened it by the notion of individual rehabilitation and reform.

The first development of this nature was in the form of night refuges and shelters which were made available to the homeless in the early part of the nineteenth century in the

large cities of England. These shelters were operated largely under the auspices of religious organizations, among which the Salvation Army figured conspicuously. The comparative ease with which food and lodging could be obtained in these large dormitory relief stations was a constant source of antagonism to those eager to preserve the working morality of the poor. At a meeting of the Council of the Charity Organization Society of London the following resolution was adopted: "That the primary object of the night refuges, namely giving food and shelter to homeless persons, having been provided for by the arrangements made under the Homeless Poor Acts [reference here is to the casual wards of the workhouses], it is desirable to give a preventive or remedial character to the institutions by conforming them to the principle of industrial schools, reformatories, penitentiaries, or homes, at which persons overtaken by misfortune may obtain a temporary asylum preparatory to their returning to a useful and respectable position in life."

From early times the record of the attempt to provide relief for the destitute homeless has shown conflict between the attitudes of those close to the church and the attitudes of the secular bodies supported by the state or by commercial and industrial interests; between the attempt to align the recipient of relief with Christianity on the one hand and with the morality of the faithful and thrifty workman on the other. The religiously oriented institutions were much more interested in saving the souls of the homeless than they were in what is traditionally called pauperization.

This controversy became well defined before the public in 1888 when General Booth brought out a scheme for the

rehabilitation of the homeless and destitute in which the services of the Salvation Army were to be extended and amplified on a huge scale. This scheme included classes other than the homeless poor, but the latter bulked large in the plan. Booth recommended two types of salvation, spiritual and industrial, but he was primarily concerned with the former and used the latter principally for the purpose of eliciting the services and funds of the upper classes. The plan provided for a series of salvaging stations to serve as collection centers for discarded goods of all kinds, a number of farm colonies within England, and a number of colonies overseas. This was the industrially rehabilitative aspect of the plan. Recruits for regeneration were to be drawn from the much amplified shelter and relief scheme.

This plan was attacked on several fronts. T. H. Huxley, in a series of articles in the London *Times,* proclaimed it as leading to a form of regimented socialism, specifically denounced it as a scheme for the setting up of an autocratic empire under the generalship of Booth, and as having implications for disaster because it flouted the Darwinian formula of "the survival of the fittest." The Charity Organization Society of London, which had for twenty years been working tooth and nail to control the relief practices of London according to principles aimed at the preservation of a sound industrial morality for the poor, denounced the scheme whole-heartedly. Its principal indictment was that the relief aspects of the plan made bums and vagrants out of the homeless poor faster than the rehabilitative plan could absorb them; also that the promulgation of the relief features would draw the homeless from all England to London. A few quo-

tations from Helen Bosanquet's history of the Charity Organization Society will make clear the attitude of organized social service toward Booth's plan:

"The scheme was presented in broad and attractive outlines, beginning with 'feeding' the outcast, and leading him through a network of shelters and workshops, town colonies and country colonies, into independence and righteousness in a colony over the sea. The strength of it lay in recognizing that influence must be brought to bear powerful enough to strengthen and change the character of the fallen. Its fatal weakness was in the fact that the whole super-structure was erected upon a basis calculated to increase the numbers of the destitute far more rapidly than they could afterwards be 'saved,' even had the scheme of regeneration proved much more effectual than it did. Nor were the preliminary food and shelter operations necessary to the subsequent process. In the existing shelters and refuges, in the casual wards, in the common lodging-houses, the Salvation Army could have found a recruiting ground for many more persons needing help than they could ever hope to deal with. As it is, twenty years' experience has shown that only a small fraction of those attracted by the food depots and shelters ever pass beyond them; while the evils which were to be banished from amongst us have been barely touched.

. . . . . .

"Little more than a month had passed before news began to come in of how the country roads were swarming with vagrants 'all going to London with the same idea of getting something from General Booth.' Very soon, also, the shelters which were to be a refining influence and to save the re-

spectable working man from the degradation of the common lodging-house and casual ward, became centers of dirt and infection, free from police inspection, to which the lowest class resorted more or less permanently, not being 'passed on' through the reformatory agencies but often transferred to Poor Law institutions."[2]

Though this plan of the Salvation Army was the last large-scale attempt of a religious organization to rehabilitate the homeless man, isolated and sporadic attempts on a much diminished scale have been tried by religious organizations for the last half century both in England and America. These have been under the direction of the churches, the missions, the Y.M.C.A., and the Salvation Army. These efforts, which made almost no impression on the problem, have been gradually supplanted or replaced by social service programs as a method of rehabilitation. This is evidenced both by the trend in emphasis on the part of some religious organizations, which started their work with a predominantly evangelical program and shifted to case work in its larger meanings, and also by the emergence, though very gradually, of some scattered case work for homeless men by the secular social work organizations. Case work was substituted for the analytic function of the work test in the attempt to exclude habitual non-workers from the benefit of relief and adapt programs of rehabilitation to the needs of the individual.

Occasional efforts were made in a few localities to define and secure a more adequate understanding of the problem. This is illustrated by the careful study by Mrs. Solenberger of a group of homeless men who had been cared for by a

[2] Helen Bosanquet, *Social Work in London 1869-1912,* pp. 345, 346, 347.

family welfare society.[3] Aside from such sporadic interests, one of the earliest indications of a general shift away from concentration on the vagrancy problem to a study of the homeless man as such was the experience of the Committee on Begging and Vagrancy of the American Association for Organizing Family Social Work. This committee, organized about the time of the 1920-21 depression, soon found that it was really studying the problem of the homeless man in its larger aspects, and the name of the committee was subsequently changed to the "Committee on the Homeless." The committee emphasized that the current work done with the homeless did not have adequate organization anywhere in the country and recommended organization as the first step. They said that the policies should fall in two general classes, constructive and repressive.[4]

Thus through the decade 1920-1930 the most important development with reference to the care of the destitute homeless in America was a gradually emerging interest on the part of social work organizations, which resulted in an attempt to organize and centralize the services of the various organizations that had interested themselves in the problem. A continuing faith in case work or rehabilitation marked the literature of the period, in spite of the relative absence of such work in practice and of the finding in a study of twenty men chosen at random from the New York Municipal Lodging House that only one of the number was regarded as having possibilities that would justify intensive case work.[5]

[3] Alice Solenberger, *One Thousand Homeless Men,* New York, 1914.

[4] Malcolm Nichols, "National Aspects of the Transient Problem," *The Family,* vol. 3, pp. 89-91, June, 1922.

[5] Roy P. Gates, "Group Treatment versus Case Treatment," *The Family,* vol. 2, pp. 241-245, February, 1922.

The rapidly expanding industrialization of the country gave some justification to the faith in the rehabilitative and relief efforts of the religious and social service agencies. If the homeless man was kept in shape to work, sooner or later he would find a job or a job would be found for him. But implicit in the program was the fallacy that pathology lay in the individual units with which the agencies dealt rather than in the inexorable social relations out of which the units emerged.

The whole social work movement, however, largely passed by the homeless men and was ignorant of and unaffected by their problems. The training schools for social workers gave no courses on homeless men, had no specialized techniques for dealing with them, and in fact had little acquaintance with them. The schools were working on the assumption that the techniques of social work developed for the needy family could be transferred intact to the homeless man.

The predominance of women in the social work field may have some bearing on this omission. The emotional attraction of children's work and the possibilities for sublimation in family case work were factors in canalizing her attention in these fields. The homeless man was usually isolated for reasons that made him unattractive to or independent of the case worker. He was highly mobile and no sooner did a case worker have a case fairly built up, in the conventional social work sense, than she found that the object of her endeavors had departed to other regions where relief was more dissociated from intrusions on the personal realm.

Another reason for the lack of interest in the problem of homeless men is that social work has been notoriously absent

on economic frontiers, the bulwarks of the individualistic temper and attitudes. Social work started with those groups in our social order on which the nineteenth century theories of individual responsibility maintained the most precarious hold: the child, the aged, and the defective. The homeless man, who characteristically has played an important rôle on our industrial frontier, has paid the penalty for that rôle by his insecurity and the scarcity of social services available to him.

Thus these programs of rehabilitation involved, first, a departure by the religious organizations from the severe policies of repression which were being used and defended by the poor law guardians and by the organized charity group, and an attempt to combine material relief with spiritual salvation rather than with deterrent penalties; second, the gradual development, both in religious and secular organizations, of social service methods designed to rehabilitate the homeless man by an analysis of his case history and by an adjustment of policies to the needs thus discovered; and third, the bare beginnings of a differentiation of the vagrant class into constituent elements. The social work groups did not extend these efforts beyond very feeble beginnings, for they were, in general, unacquainted with and negligent of the homeless man. Implicit in the earlier and later stages of these policies of relief was the assumption that the homeless man was a pathological individual whose pathology could be modified by appropriate methods of individual treatment.

These policies had the virtue of alleviating the severity of the poor law but in other respects were largely futile because, like the policy of repression, they were attempts to preserve

a social order which was being changed by forces much more powerful than the counter-forces which the religious or social service agencies could initiate.

Mass Relief

Although the problem of the homeless man assumed unprecedented proportions when the depression broke in 1929, it cannot be understood if regarded merely as a depression phenomenon. In fact, the demands on municipal lodging houses were as great during the "new era" prosperity of the late twenties as during the depression years of 1920-21. The problem became steadily more acute during the decade of the twenties in spite of increasing prosperity. It is necessary to look to the broad economic and social changes which were taking place during several decades prior to the current depression in order to understand why the army of the destitute homeless so far outdistanced its previous proportions. While there is considerable dispute as to the nature of these changes and conflicting explanations of the current unemployment in terms of long-time factors,[6] it is evident that the problem of the homeless man has been greatly accentuated and given permanence by these changes and that consequently a new relief policy is imperative. Among these changes are the cessation, due to the closing of the industrial and agricultural frontiers, of the demand for a large mobile labor supply, the technological displacements, the weakening of the family and other primary group attachments, and the in-

[6] Lewis Corey, *The Decline of American Capitalism,* New York, 1934; Paul H. Douglas, *The Problem of Unemployment,* New York, 1931; Abraham Epstein, *Insecurity: A Challenge to America,* New York, 1933; Lewis Mumford, *Technics and Civilization,* New York, 1934.

creasing length of life coupled with a decrease in the maximum age of employability.

The unemployed and homeless man came typically from the ranks of those who have been utilized in the basic industrialization of America. The "raw human material" of this expansion was drawn largely from the agricultural regions in the United States, Mexico, and Europe. The serfdom of the agricultural system in the southern and eastern parts of Europe and the southern part of the United States provided the necessary setting for the release of a huge migration to the regions of industrial expansion. Cheap transportation to the coast for an oppressed European peasantry that constituted the "new immigration" was facilitated by the large development of railways in those parts of Europe. In this period of the "new immigration" 28,000,000 people came to the United States. They built the railroads to the West Coast, they followed construction booms, they built highways across the country. With the cessation of the industrial expansion and the closing of the industrial as well as the agricultural frontier, the need for a large army of mobile labor has largely ceased. This group has completed its economic function and many of its members find themselves in the scrapheap, i.e., the breadline.

The development of labor-saving devices has resulted in a displacement of labor and an expanding output. At the beginning of the depression fewer men were employed in railroading, in agriculture, in mining, and in factories than a decade earlier. For instance, in the decade following 1919, 130,000 farm hands were displaced, concurrently with an increased output of 28 per cent per worker. The unskilled

laborers displaced in these occupations have seldom found employment in trade and transportation, road construction, personal service, and the professions, which have been expanding in recent years.

Intimate personal relationships have disintegrated as a result of the rapid industrialization, the growth of the cities, and other social changes in the United States during the last three quarters of a century. Individuation has been a rapidly expanding outcome of the economic changes of the past few decades. When the only factor holding a man to a particular location is the job, he goes on the loose when he loses that job. As a part of the break in the primary group relationship there emerges an attitude which inhibits the detached member from obtaining care from his family when his resources are exhausted; therefore in time of stress he must look to others than the family group for succor.

The large number of older men among the destitute homeless links the problem with the general problem of old age, which as an economic and social problem has become increasingly acute during the past several decades. One phase of this old age dependency is the increasing length of life. This is described in the following statements of the New York Commission on Old Age Security: "Since 1840, when modern public health methods were just beginning, the average length of life has been increased by 50 per cent, from 39 years to over 58 years at the present time. This progress has been continuous from decade to decade. As a result many more people pass through childhood and the prime of life and reach old age than at any time before. This is true throughout the entire civilized world, and wherever modern

medicine and public health have been introduced. This accounts for the gradual increase in the percentage of the total population which is now found in the upper age groups. While the extreme limits of old age may not have been lengthened, more people attain old age."[7]

This, of course, represents the setting but not the substance of the old-age problem. In general, men want to be economically useful and independent as long as their physical condition permits. That industry cannot make use of the last score of years of a workman's life is not a problem in physical disabilities, but of strong competition for the available jobs. Most of these men are capable of sustained labor to the age of sixty or sixty-five. Also, employers purchase their blanket liability coverage from insurance companies on a basis that in many instances does not permit them to hire men older than forty or forty-five, and in some instances not older than thirty-five. Keen competition among insurance companies which are anxious to reduce accident risks lies back of these discriminations against older men.

Thus old age as an economic and social problem is the product of two contrary tendencies. On the one hand, the threshold of age eligibility has been lowered in recent years in keeping with the highly competitive character of the labor market and, on the other, life expectancy for the average man has been greatly increased. This has resulted in an increase of unemployment in the upper age groups. The old age problem as presented above, when articulated with the breakdown of primary group relationships, accounts for a large

[7] New York Commission, "Report on Old Age Security," Albany, New York, *Leg. Doc.* 1930, No. 67, p. 40.

part of the increase in the number of men needing relief and for the permanence of the homeless group.

As a result of these and other social and economic changes the problem of the homeless man has assumed not only the mass proportions which have been evident, but also an inevitability and permanence which have only recently been realized. The homeless man, in this sense, is as inevitably a product of these forces as the mobile man was a product of social changes in the eighteenth century.

These social and economic changes have caused many people to see the futility of the rehabilitative approach to the problem and to feel the necessity of substituting a different type of treatment. The case work effort to rehabilitate the homeless man and make him self-sustaining necessarily broke down during the period of general unemployment because the social order had no place for the homeless man. He is impatient of attempts to intrude upon his personal life in the name of a program of rehabilitation which does not touch his fundamental problems. The term "case-maker" is applied to the case worker in contempt for his attempt to individualize the treatment of what the men feel should be a highly impersonal situation. The emergence of this changed point of view is seen in the literature in the later years of the depression; interest is turning away from the possibilities and techniques of case work to the techniques of mass relief and the problems of control in giving relief. Methods of mass relief seem to be an inevitable necessity in this changed situation.

In the early years of the depression, however, the method which should be used was not apparent. Wild schemes were

suggested and confusion was widespread. Previous facilities were entirely inadequate. The need was immediate and imperative. As is customary in such situations, the expansion of existing facilities was the solution adopted. More lodging houses and shelters were provided, and more case workers were employed. The effort to combine shelter care with case work was made on the assumption that case workers had been trained in the techniques needed for solving the problems of these men. But case workers had been trained for case work rather than for the mass relief which was necessary. There does not now exist any group of workers who can look either to their past experiences or training for guidance in the care for the newly emerging needs of the destitute homeless. As a result, the efforts at care for the destitute homeless in their large mass proportions have been highly ineffectual and have resulted in practically nothing except bigger, but not much better, flophouses.

Social insurance was the nearest approach to mass relief in earlier years. Old-age pensions, insurance against unemployment, and other means of security were adopted long before the depression in some countries and more recently and in more restricted form in the United States. These methods, while unquestionably a contribution to social welfare, are inadequate because employment is needed for employable men, if they are not to become demoralized. Social insurance does provide an income for periods of unemployment and unemployability, but social welfare and the fundamental values of homeless men call for a social and economic organization which will provide jobs for all employable men.

Several methods of providing employment have been attempted during the later years of the depression. The CCC camps and public works of different kinds have been made available for homeless men as well as others. In general, the wage rate on such employment has been somewhat less than that in the competitive market. These public employment programs have been vigorously opposed by various groups. Business interests especially oppose them on the ground of unfair competition, though they themselves have made little effort to develop plans for employment of the unemployed. These mass relief methods have generally been fostered and directed by persons trained, in so far as trained persons have been secured, in political science, economics, sociology, or social work.

Thus the mass relief policies consisted, first, of the enlargement of the facilities for outdoor relief and shelter care; second, an attempt to bring these forms of relief completely under the control of social workers trained in case work; third, social insurance; and fourth, work relief projects which were designed to meet the fundamental need of employment, which could not possibly be met by case work methods.

The programs for destitute homeless men have ranged through repression, rehabilitation, and mass relief. The policies of repression and of rehabilitation were attempts to adjust men to a situation which had already changed and therefore necessarily failed to solve the fundamental problem. In particular, the recent economic changes have made the program of individual case work, as a general solution of the problem, futile and anachronistic. While repression and

rehabilitation do not provide a general solution of the problem of homeless men, they will continue in use and be adjuncts to a policy which does provide a general solution. This general solution unquestionably will be some form of mass relief. While present methods of mass relief are inadequate, experiments of different kinds are being made, largely under the guidance of persons trained in public administration. The aim of such experiments is to solve the problem of unemployment by the method of providing employment.

CHAPTER IX

POLICIES AND PRESSURES

The social pressures which have influenced shelter policies constitute an illuminating chapter in the history of homeless men. These pressures have been exerted by religious, political, social work, business, and other groups in the community. While these groups were somewhat at variance with each other during the period 1901-1930, they have come into overt conflict for domination of the shelters since 1931. Both in the earlier and in the later periods most of these groups were interested primarily in their own welfare and only secondarily or not at all in the welfare of homeless men.

The Municipal Lodging House, 1901-1930

The first Municipal Lodging House in Chicago was established in 1901 and was operated on funds secured by private subscription. In 1903 the Department of Police was given authority to administer it and the City Council made an appropriation of $10,000. Raymond Robins was the superintendent of the Lodging House until October, 1905, when James Mullenbach succeeded him. In 1908 the administration was transferred to the city Department of Health, and in 1917 to the city Department of Public Welfare, which retained control until 1934.

Purposes and policies. The principal purpose in the establishment of the Chicago Municipal Lodging House in 1901 was the deterrence of vagrancy and begging. Secondary purposes were the deterrence of petty criminality and the

protection of the public health. Because of its railway facilities Chicago had become headquarters for the migratory and transient workers, and because of its industries and the World's Fair in 1893, it had attracted thousands of skilled and unskilled workers. Many of these workers were left stranded in Chicago in the depression in the early years of the decade of the nineties. Lodgings for homeless men were provided in the police stations and food in the breadlines. In spite of these provisions begging and petty thievery increased year by year. The mounting opposition to this situation was expressed by newspapers and public leaders and resulted in the establishment of the Municipal Lodging House.

The number of lodgings provided for men by public authorities decreased radically after the opening of the Municipal Lodging House. In 1901, before the Municipal Lodging House opened,[1] 92,591 lodgings were provided in police stations; in 1902 only 16,837 lodgings were provided, of which 11,097 were in the Municipal Lodging House and 5,740 in police stations. Thus the number of lodgings was reduced 82 per cent in the first year of the Municipal Lodging House. The argument was made that this reduction was evidence that the Municipal Lodging House had driven the vagrants and beggars out of the city and had discouraged other homeless men from coming to Chicago.

Each able-bodied man who registered in the Municipal Lodging House was required to work one day during the three days he was allowed to remain. The work consisted of

[1] The Municipal Lodging House opened December 21, 1901.

disposal of garbage and refuse, and of maintenance of streets and alleys. It was believed that if a man wanted a job he could find one and that three days was sufficient for this.

While the Lodging House compelled men to work for the relief they received and restricted relief to a very short time, it attempted also to prevent other agencies and private individuals from giving relief to homeless men. In his report for 1904 Raymond Robins recommended that the police and the courts use stringent methods to prevent street begging and that the use of police stations as lodging places be greatly restricted. He asked that the police be instructed to furnish no lodgings except in extremely cold weather or when application was made after 10 P.M. "Such emergency lodgers should be registered and given a card the next morning to the Municipal Lodging House, with the warning that if they applied again to the police stations they would be arrested and prosecuted as vagrants."[2]

The policies of the Municipal Lodging House became more restrictive with the passing of the years. In 1914 an applicant for relief at the Municipal Lodging House might be required to sleep on the floor after the first night in order that life there might not be too attractive. In 1915 a municipal woodyard was opened and notices were sent through the Central Western states that meals and lodgings in Chicago were preceded by two hours' work in the woodyard. These measures were designed to compel homeless men to support themselves after a short period of relief and to frighten vagrants away from Chicago.

[2] *Chicago Police Report, 1902-1904,* pp. 115-120.

The rehabilitation of homeless men was discussed on many occasions. The first two superintendents—Raymond Robins and James Mullenbach—were humanitarian leaders and were intensely interested in rehabilitation. Nevertheless, at no time in the early period did the Lodging House have an effective program of rehabilitation. Efforts were made to assist unemployed men to secure jobs, but in periods of unemployment, when these men came to the Lodging House, the efforts were generally futile. Occasionally the superintendent had a kindly conversation with an unemployed man in the attempt to maintain morale. Nevertheless, these efforts at rehabilitation did not make much impression on homeless men. They regarded the Lodging House merely as another flophouse.

During the years 1917-1934 the Municipal Lodging House was nominally under the direction of the Department of Public Welfare. Since the number of unemployed men during the earlier years of this period was greatly reduced, no appropriation was made for the support of the Lodging House and it was not opened during the years 1917-1923.

An attempt at individualization and centralization. During the depression of 1920-1921, the problem of unemployment again became acute. Religious agencies and other organizations increased their facilities for the care of unemployed men. Twelve missions maintained breadlines, the Salvation Army and the Christian Industrial League opened new shelters, the Legion turned over its Hall to homeless veterans for sleeping quarters, and the United Charities gave relief to a larger number of homeless men.

Because of this acute situation and due largely to pressure

from others, the Council of Social Agencies of Chicago organized a Committee on Homeless Men to make a study of the migratory and casual workers in the city. The study was made by Nels Anderson and the findings and recommendations were presented to the public in his book *The Hobo*. Centralization and individualization were the two principal recommendations.[3] Centralization was to be secured by the establishment of a Clearing House, and individualization by offering "medical, psychological, and sociological diagnosis as a basis for vocational guidance, after-care service, and industrial rehabilitation."[4]

These two recommendations were approved by the Council of Social Agencies and the Department of Public Welfare and in October, 1923, the Men's Service Station or Clearing House was opened. The attempt to promote centralization and individualization in the care of homeless men was virtually abandoned a few months later when the number of homeless men, driven to ask for relief by unemployment and severe weather, over-taxed facilities. Thereafter the Municipal Lodging House and the other relief stations for unemployed men reverted to their previous procedures. During the years 1924-1930, in spite of increasing numbers of unemployed men, the Municipal Lodging House was closed in summers and during some of the winters. The Salvation Army, the Christian Industrial League, and the missions enlarged their facilities. In the winter of 1926-

[3] In addition a program which was directed at improvement in the more remote future included an Industrial Institute to provide vocational training for the industrially inadequate, and a State Farm colony for Industrial Rehabilitation to provide compulsory and regular work for vagrants.

[4] Nels Anderson, *The Hobo,* p. 122. See also p. 136.

1927, as a result of an increase of petty stealing and of begging among Negroes, a shelter was opened in the Negro district. This shelter was financed by the Urban League and operated by the police.

Confusion and Overlapping of Relief Services

The number of destitute men in the city increased enormously when the depression began in 1929. Begging and petty crimes likewise increased. Men were sleeping in the parks, under Wacker Drive, and in hallways. This disgusted the citizens and gave visitors a bad impression of the city. Also, some citizens feared riots and revolution as the result of the unemployment. It was reported that some insurance companies would not insure plate glass windows and that others raised their rates because of the danger of violence from the unemployed. Thus, the unesthetic appearance of beggars and the danger of crime and violence were the principal motives in the development of more facilities for the care of homeless men.

Efforts to provide more adequate facilities were made independently by several types of interests and resulted in overlapping and confusion of services. The religious organizations, such as the Salvation Army and the Christian Industrial League, secured additional buildings and appealed to the public for increased contributions of money and goods. Likewise, the political and semi-political interests attempted to expand their facilities. Mrs. Conkey, Commissioner of Public Welfare, made plans for more municipal lodging houses. Mrs. Collins secured from the county the old criminal court building and jail at 54 West Austin and turned it into

a lodging house. Though her lodging house was really a ten-cent flophouse and was regarded by many people as an expression of political ambition, she appealed to private citizens to finance her great "humanitarian project for the unemployed men of the city." The Homeless Men's Division of the United Charities increased its service to homeless men in the early months of the depression;[5] in other respects the social workers showed little interest in homeless men.

Out of this condition of overlapping agencies centralized relief developed. Citizens were frequently unwilling to make gifts to each of several agencies which were dealing with the problem and demanded a central agency with authority to allot funds to the several functioning units. Furthermore, it became evident that public funds for relief purposes could be secured by the establishment of a single state agency with control over the relief policies.

As a result of these and other influences, Governor Emmerson in October, 1930, appointed a Commission on Unemployment and Relief. This Commission raised funds by private subscription, established a Clearing House for Unemployed Men, engaged registration clerks from the group which applied for relief, and arranged to finance the Salvation Army, the Christian Industrial League, the Urban League, and the Department of Public Welfare in proportion to the number of lodgings and meals provided by each organization.

Conflict for Control of Shelters

Shelter policies have not been determined by objective criteria of efficiency in promoting the public welfare, but by

[5] The Homeless Men's Division of the United Charities was discontinued in 1930 following the development of shelter relief for homeless men.

a conflict of groups which endeavored to realize interests of their own. Politicians concerned themselves with the shelters in order to enhance their political power; they wished to control a larger number of patronage jobs, to control contracts, and to have supervision over prospective voters. Business interests endeavored to influence shelter policies in the direction of reduction of expenditures in order to reduce taxes. Religious organizations and social work groups had their own programs and were not wholly disinterested in their concern for the needs of homeless men.

Month by month more men flocked to the shelters. The groups competing for control of the shelters saw in this rapid growth a need to protect and an opportunity to promote its own program. The rapidity of the growth stimulated them to aggressive behavior which brought them into sharp conflict.

After 1931 the conflict for control of the shelters became direct and overt. The Salvation Army and the Christian Industrial League, with their historical interest in lodging houses for homeless men, claimed that the care of the depression homeless was their special function. The Chicago Department of Public Welfare, which had nominally been in control of the Municipal Lodging House since 1917, insisted that the expanded shelter program was their special function. And the social workers, who for decades had paid little attention to the homeless men, saw the necessity of expanding into the public relief field and made efforts to bring the shelters under the direction of social workers. The business group made no effort to administer the shelters but aggressively insisted that relief for homeless men must be on

a minimum cost basis and attempted to control every administration in that respect.

The administrative authority tried to keep these competing interests as harmonious as possible and to avoid the antagonism of any of them. This necessarily meant compromise in the effort to satisfy all of the interests as completely as possible. During the period since 1930 the business interests have probably had more power in the decisions of the administration of the shelters than any of the other groups and the politicians the least power.

The shelter men, for the most part, have been pawns in this contest of forces. They have made a few feeble efforts to exert influence, but their success has been negligible either because they have developed no leaders or because their leaders have been weeded out for trouble-making. The actual determination of policies has been from above, by groups which had only a remote appreciation of the viewpoint and wishes of the men.

Conflict between the social work group and the religious agencies. At the beginning of the depression the Salvation Army and the Christian Industrial League were in control of most of the shelters. Social workers were dissatisfied with the methods which were being used and were anxious to secure control of the policies in order to place the students who had been trained in the schools of social work and to promote their own program. In the spring of 1931 the Committee on Homeless Men of the Chicago Council of Social Agencies made a survey of the shelter operated by the Salvation Army. They recommended that individualized treatment and case work should be expanded and that the

Clearing House should have a staff of trained social workers. Plans were initiated to promote central registration of homeless men, physical examinations, case work, morale maintenance activities, centralized health service, work relief, and a central clothing depot. The Clearing House was provided with a staff of ten trained case workers and began regular operations in October, 1931. Thus the social work group succeeded in bringing the Central Clearing House under the control of trained social workers.

They found more resistance to their effort to staff the shelters with trained social workers. In 1931-32 five of the fifteen shelters were operated by the Salvation Army, four by the Christian Industrial League, three by the Chicago Urban League, and three by the city Department of Public Welfare. Each of these organizations desired to keep its own staff, and to retain control of its own shelters, for they were securing a part of their income from public funds and the larger the number of men fed and lodged, the greater the income.

On February 5, 1932, the Illinois Emergency Relief Commission was established and assumed control of the operation of the shelters. Arrangements were made for the private agencies which had been operating the shelters to loan equipment and staff to the Commission. This arrangement continued until the spring of 1933, when on the initiative of the business group, represented by Butler, and of the social work group, represented by Beasley, the policy that "public funds should be administered by public agencies" was adopted. This forced the Salvation Army and the Christian Industrial League entirely out of the relief picture, except

that the Salvation Army retained some control over the Wrigley shelter. The Service Bureau for Men, which was a branch of the Illinois Emergency Relief Commission, was under the direction of Beasley, a social service appointee, and it took over complete control of the shelters which had been operated previously by the religious agencies.

Conflict between the social work group and the Department of Public Welfare. During the early months of the depression the social work group came frequently into conflict with the municipal Department of Public Welfare. When the Service Bureau for Men was established the conflict between the social workers and the Department of Public Welfare became more acute. Mrs. Conkey, the Commissioner of Public Welfare, resisted the drive for centralized control. She placed the municipal lodging houses under the direction of Riggs, who believed that he might be able to induce the Illinois Emergency Relief Commission to turn the administration of all relief of homeless men in Chicago over to the Department of Public Welfare. He had an ambition to become manager of all of the shelters. He knew that social service must be developed in the municipal shelters if this was to be accomplished. For this reason rather than because of any inherent interest in the social service program, he induced the Commissioner of Public Welfare to establish a social service department.

In the summer of 1933 Beasley resigned as director of the Service Bureau for Men. Riggs did everything possible to secure the position, for he felt that in that position he could unite all of the shelters under the control of the Department of Public Welfare. The Commission was not impressed by

his ability or his political influences and refused to appoint him. Instead they appointed Allan R. Carpenter. In the new administration Riggs was regarded as an inefficient and disturbing factor in the relief program. He was discharged by Carpenter three times, but each time was re-appointed by the Commission, which was unwilling to affront the political interests by discharging their man. However, he was given an unimportant position, and Mrs. Conkey in April, 1934, relinquished control of the municipal lodging houses which then became an integral part of the facilities of the Service Bureau for Men. From time to time efforts were made to restore the political influence. Conners, the "boss" of the most corrupt ward in Chicago, wrote the Commission, asking that Riggs be given a position of importance in the Service Bureau. This request was not granted and in a short time Riggs was discharged. Thus the politicians were driven out of control of the shelters.

Orthodox social workers regain control. Allan R. Carpenter, director of the Service Bureau from 1933 until the spring of 1935, had been engaged in social work previously, but he did not place as much emphasis on individualized care as the case work group demanded. The orthodox social workers who controlled the City Transient Service and the Service for Unattached Women had become influential in the headquarters of the Commission, and they attacked the policies of the Service Bureau as managed by Carpenter. In addition, Carpenter had aroused the enmity of the political interests, and had many conflicts with the business interests which were attempting to reduce relief costs. Because of this opposition, the Commission took advantage of a minor ad-

ministrative indiscretion which Carpenter committed, dismissed him, and substituted Mrs. Moon, who had been the director of the Service for Unattached Women.

Mrs. Moon transferred as many men as possible to outdoor relief in districts where trained case workers could take care of their needs.[1] Only the older men and the incapacitated were left in the shelters. Thus the social work group secured relatively complete control of the relief of the homeless men.

Business interests control shelter policies. Business men agreed that as a protection against begging, crime, and communism relief must be given to homeless men, but they insisted that the cost of the relief must be kept at a minimum. This problem first appeared clearly in 1930 and 1931 when the Commission was providing funds for the shelters operated by the Salvation Army and the Christian Industrial League. At first the Commission supplied the funds but had no supervision of their expenditures. Due to criticism of this method of financing relief, Butler was appointed by the Commission as its representative to supervise the expenditures. He put constant pressure on the organizations to improve their business methods. Because of the ineffectiveness of these efforts he came to the conclusion that "public funds should be spent by public agencies" and therefore assisted the social work group to eliminate the religious organizations from the management of the shelters.

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[1] This plan has driven some of the homeless men to revert to the use of the police stations as lodging places. On the night of April 10, 1936, for instance, 136 men were in the basement of the Desplaines Street Police Station, sleeping on the concrete floor, packed together as closely as possible. On inquiry it was found that many of these men had previously lived in the shelters.

Butler continued to put pressure on the shelter management to reduce expenditures. The social workers believed that his economy was of the penny-pinching type and was poor economy in the long run. They pointed out that since the operating costs of the Service Bureau for Men were about 15 cents per man per day, the standard of living was necessarily extremely low and was failing to accomplish the objectives of the community in the establishment of the shelters. Preceding chapters have shown some of the demoralizing effects of this low standard of living.

Later, Charles S. Bond, comptroller of the budget, became the business dictator of relief in Cook County. He appointed Robert R. Bacchus business manager of non-family services. Handicraft work in the shelters was eliminated because it was believed to be a wasteful expenditure of money. Social workers were replaced in several positions by persons who had a knowledge of business principles but no knowledge of social work. Business economy is now dominant as a relief policy in Chicago and is supported by some of the newspapers which have advocated reduction of taxes.

Patronage, Contracts, and Graft

Patronage, favoritism in contracts, and graft have cropped out occasionally in the shelters, though the influence of the Commission in general has been definitely against such practices. In so far as these practices have occurred they have resulted in increased expenditures without improved services.

Patronage. The Illinois Emergency Relief Commission, although political in the sense that it was appointed by the

governor, has resisted the efforts of local politicians to secure control of the shelters. Patronage appointments were made in the shelters maintained by the Department of Public Welfare when these shelters were operated independently. Otherwise the record is surprisingly clean in view of the general practice in Illinois and Chicago of filling positions with deserving members of the right party.

The nearest approach to patronage appointments which could be discovered involved personal relationships rather than party relationships. A state senator had an old and favored servant for whom he wished to secure a position. He got in touch with a city politician, who got in touch with a member of the Commission, and he in turn with others, until the person was reached who could give an order to the director of the Service Bureau for Men to place this old servant on the staff. In another case a person who had passed the examinations but was well down on the list of applicants was presented to the director by an officer of the Commission for immediate appointment, thus being promoted out of his position in the list of applicants. Organized labor was back of this request. The number of such appointments, however, was very small.

Favoritism in contracts. The purchase of $106,000 worth of lumber from one lumber company without competitive bidding[6] is an illustration of the favoritism in contracts. This had been accomplished by making every order less than $500, which was the minimum contract without competitive bidding. The fact that 1,171 orders of less than $500 each were placed with one lumber company implies

[6] See Chicago newspapers of March 18, 1935.

bribery or political pressure. This does not mean that the Relief Commissioners were personally involved, for the minor officials had responsibility for such purchases.

Some business concerns apparently entered into collusion in making bids that were supposed to be competitive. Thus one meat packer made the lowest bid on wieners, another on liver, another on mutton, another on hearts. As a result the meat contracts were divided among the principal packers in the city. The same was true of grocery supplies: one firm made the lowest bid on one article, another on something else. If these business interests did not get together in advance and agree on the distribution of contracts, the contracts were distributed exactly as they would have been if such an agreement had been made. This prevented real competitive bidding and hence these business concerns were not, in this respect, striving to keep taxes as low as possible.

The shelter management has had difficulty in compelling some of the business firms to carry out their contracts honestly. An engineer on the shelter staff had the duty of inspecting goods that came to the shelters and determining whether they met the specifications. When he reported that the goods did not meet specifications he was instructed to send the goods back. He followed instructions. The business firms blustered and complained, but finally sent goods which met the specifications. Again they tried to substitute inferior goods or send short weights, and again the goods were returned. Finally, it was decided by officers of the Commission that this engineer was not needed and he was dismissed in spite of strenuous efforts of the director of the Service Bureau to retain him.

Graft. During the period when the Commission had no supervision over the expenditures of funds allotted to religious organizations for the maintenance of the shelters, charges were made that these organizations padded accounts and misapplied funds and specifically that when the Commission took over the shelters in 1933, the inventories were found to be over-estimated to the extent of several thousand dollars.

Certain business concerns have tried to bribe relief workers in an attempt to secure relief orders. A case worker reported that he had supervision of the expenditure of about $15,000 a month for clothing orders in one of the shelters. A clothing firm approached him with the suggestion that they would be willing "to get together with him" if he would send them more business. Another clothier came to the office of a case worker with a request for more clothing orders. He asked to look at the list of approved stores and when he laid the list on the desk he put a five-dollar bill underneath it. Another case worker who had charge of orders amounting to about $100,000 a year stated, "The merchants simply make life miserable for me. They try to get me to place orders with them. They have sent me cigars, clothing, money, and one even suggested an automobile."

These incidents do not indicate the extent of the graft. There is a somewhat general feeling that relief is "a racket" and some business men attempt to get their share in this manner. The impression of the investigators in this study was that the graft was very restricted and that the Commission did everything possible to eliminate it as soon as it came to their attention.

Location of the Shelters

The shelters have been located in Hobohemia since the establishment of the first Municipal Lodging House in 1901. This location is the cheapest and provokes the least opposition of the neighborhood.

If shelters are to be operated at a minimum cost, as the business interests have insisted, they must be located where rents are low. Of the 20 shelters which on March 1, 1935, were used for lodgings, 11 were secured rent-free; of the others, 6 were factory buildings in which the rent was 32 cents per man per month, and 3 were buildings of other kinds in which the rent was $1.56 per man per month. If those for which no rent was charged are combined with the others, the rent would be 24 cents per man per month. Probably Hobohemia is the only area in the city in which lodgings for homeless men could be obtained at that cost.

The second principle involved in the location of shelters was the absence of effective resistance by the neighborhood. On several occasions sites for shelters were selected in fairly respectable neighborhoods. Storms of protests against bringing homeless men into the neighborhood and complaints that they would lead to an influx of bootleg joints, houses of prostitution, and gambling establishments made it necessary to change the site. Hobohemia is the only area in which shelters can be located without such protests. Even here opposition has developed in a few cases.

The management of a system of relief for homeless men must take account of these factors when they locate a shelter. Similarly in determining other shelter policies they must take

account of community attitudes, social relationships, and group pressures.

The preceding description of policies and pressures indicates that the shelter men have been relatively helpless recipients of relief. They have had no voice in the determination of policies. The policies have been determined by a conflict of groups with specialized interests, and these groups have been largely ignorant of the shelter men themselves. The effects on the shelter men and the analysis of their attitudes which have been presented in this book show the inadequacy of existing polices and point the way to the development of more effective policies.

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